



# Bee Talk

Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of  
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association  
September 2010 [www.blackburnbeekeepers.com](http://www.blackburnbeekeepers.com) Registered Charity

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

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| <b><u>DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL</u></b> |                           |              |                                                                                              |
| John Zamorski                                  | Hon. Sec                  | 01200 427661 | <a href="mailto:john@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk">john@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk</a>         |
| Philip Ainsworth                               | Hon. Treas.               | 0771 3161480 | <a href="mailto:email philipainsworth@btconnect.com">email philipainsworth@btconnect.com</a> |

## MEMBERS SERVICES

Bayvoral - Apiguard - Oxalic Acid - Thymol -  
Fumidi'B'

These Chemicals for treating bees can be obtained from:  
Bill Ainsworth. Phone 01282 614015  
(Bill will have them available at beekeeper's meetings)

## LIBRARY

There is an extensive range of books on all  
aspects of beekeeping that can be borrowed  
from the Association library.  
Please contact  
David Rayner on 01200 426898

## MEMBERSHIP

REGISTERED MEMBER. Subscription will be £18.00

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. Subscription will be £11.00

COUNTRY MEMBER. This is for people who do not keep bees, but wish to receive BBKA News and attend branch meetings etc. This class of member does not include any insurance cover. Subscription will be £10.00

ASSOCIATE MEMBER. A member of our branch only, without any benefits from the BBKA or County. Subscription will be £9.00

### IMPORTANT INSURANCE NOTICE

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.

For insurance purposes subs will need to be promptly, otherwise you will not have third party insurance

SUBS SHOULD BE PAID TO PHILIP AINSWORTH HON. TREAS.9 Duchess Street Darwen Blackburn BB3 0QQ  
Phone 07713161480

## *Association Swarm Catchers.*

*A small charge is made to collect swarms to cover expenses which is up to the discretion of the individual collector*

### *BLACKBURN, DARWEN, ACCRINGTON, MELLOR, PRESTON, ROSSENDALE AREAS*

Bob Fulton

Telephone 01254-772780

E Mail::: home.brew@talktalk.net

### *CLITHEROE AND SURROUNDING AREAS*

John Zamorski

Telephone 01200-427661

E Mail::: john@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk

David Bush,

Telephone *01200 428152*

Email :::david.bush2@talktalk.net

### *BURNLEY, NELSON AND SURROUNDING AREAS*

Bill Ainsworth

Telephone 01282-614015

E Mail::: billscotroad@o2.co.uk

Please feel free to ring any of the above in your area and they will do their best to sort out the problem.

Please bear in mind that the swarm collectors will only deal with honey bee swarms and will not deal with bumble-bee or wasp problems.

## FUTURE BRANCH MEETINGS

| DATE                                                                                                                                | TIME | VENUE                                                       | ORGANISER/CONTACT                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reminder to all committee members. Meetings marked * are also committee meetings which will start one hour before the main meeting. |      |                                                             |                                                                           |
| 19/9/2010                                                                                                                           | 2pm  | Angela Moyles, Twiston Lane, Twiston. BB7 4BZ               | Association Bar Bee Q with Angela Moyle and John Zamorski                 |
| 3/10/2010                                                                                                                           | 2pm  | Salmesbury Village Hall, Cuerdale Lane, Salmesbury. PR5 0UY | Association Honey Show starts 2pm. 12.30pm to 1.45pm setting up times.    |
| 14/11/2010                                                                                                                          | 2pm  | Colne Masonic Hall, 91 Albert Road, Colne. BB80BS           | 2.00pm Annual General Meeting With Free Pie and Peas Supper served at 3pm |

We will, where possible open hives so bring along your protective clothing just in case.

## UK Honey Labelling Regulations

### National Honey Show

*It's a bit early to be thinking about the National Honey Show isn't it?*

*Well, not really, especially if you are new to beekeeping and joined your local association after 1st*

*August 2009. Is that you? If so, you can get in free!*

*To get your free ticket you need to ask your Association Secretary to apply on your behalf to the NHS*

*General Secretary before 31st July. Time rushes by when the season starts, so get that application in now.*

*This year the show will be bigger than ever. The trade stands will all be together in a brighter hall*

*with a wide selection of equipment and books. We have a full programme of workshops (book*

*beforehand) and lectures with world class speakers. Whilst the active season is now in full swing, do*

*take a moment a look at the NHS website: [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk).*

*The National Honey Show will be held in St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey, 28th - 30th October 2010.*

*Revd. H F Capener, Hon Sec, National Honey Show*

*Below is our simple advice on honey labelling. For more detailed information - go to the website of the Food Standards Agency. [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)*

*1. The Word "HONEY" is required.*

*2. The weight must be on the label - we will ensure it is the legal size and format.*

*3. You can specify the area where the honey is produced. For example, Lincolnshire, Forest of Dean, Scottish Borders.*

*4. You can specify the type of honey. For example, Heather, Borage. The honey must be at least 75% of that particular type.*

*5. If you are selling the honey, you must have your name and address on the label. It does not need to be complete but you should be able to be found from the information.*

*6. If you are selling the honey through a third party, you must have a lot number.*

*7. New for 2003 You must have a best before date on the jar. We suggest 2-5 years from now.*

*8. New for 2003 You must have a country of origin on the jar. For example - Produce of England, Product of Scotland, Harvested in Wales. Adding the country to the end of your address is not acceptable.*

*E H Thorne (Beehives) Ltd disclaims all responsibility for all consequences of any person acting on, or refraining from acting in reliance on, information contained above.*

*From EH Thorne's online catalogue 2010 - other sources are available*

# WHAT'S IN THE HONEY POT?



## A few snippets of news and information that might be of interest

### Editorial

*I am writing this editorial, not from Thailand, where I usually write from but from the UK , where I have had to come back due to a family bereavement. Whilst I was in Thailand, I had news saying how great the weather had been and how well the bees had built up and what a bumper crop of honey everyone was going to have. Well I am back, its rained for a month since I have been here, Its cold and miserable and to be honest I will be glad to get back to the sun. What brings into question though is what as been happening to the bees. They did well in the great couple of months of May and June, it fact they did so well that by the end of June lots of you would have great stocks and lots of supers filled up with honey ready to be extracted. Then it came, the great British summer, and what happened, the overflowing hives which were packed with bees and honey could not get out and bring in any more, so they started to eat what they had, and with being so many in the hive, they ate most of the stores, if not all of the stores. And then they began to starve. So really, what I am trying to say is never, ever in the Uk, take anything for granted, keep a look out for every situation and take action. In this case, maybe the stores should have been taken off and the bees fed, that is if you wanted the honey, if not just let them eat it, still monitoring them to see how they are for stores and if low again feed.*

*I have heard that some people are bringing in queens from some part of Germany, claiming that they do not swarm for at least 3 years. I have no idea where they got this from but its a joke. If any hives carried on like that, all the bees in the world would die out. What the silly so and so,s have also done is pay £50 quid too. Cons will never cease as long as there are gullible people about. Another story I have heard is that some members have took bees off one of our members, who as kindly gave them, in spring, for free, and then in late summer came back to him and complained that the bees were no good and that they have not built up. It spring or at any time when you get some bees which are on,lets say 2 or 3 frames, the first thing that must be done is to feed, feed and feed, so as they will build up. Its not the bees ,its the beekeeper. Think about it if feed is on, they do not have to go and collect it, its right there for them, day and night and they will build up quickly. So come on, blame yourself, instead of trying to put the blame on someone else.*

*Meeting up to the time of writing have been well attended with lots of new comers and beginners attending and picking up lots of info of our more experienced members. At the last meeting our Secretary John Zamorski who is also the seasonal bee inspector for our area as, due to other commitments decided to resign as the secretary of our club. We therefore need someone to fill in his shoes it could even be a shared job between two people if necessary. John is willing to give assistance and help until the new person or persons are settled in. So please think about becoming the secretary, no need to be an experienced beekeeper. I hope, and ask on behalf of the commitee that the position will be filled and that we wish thank John and wish him all the very best in what he does in the future.*

*It as been pointed out to me by the commitee that some of the views expressed in Beetalk and on the website are coming from the commitee and that some of our members are not to happy about some of the things I have had to say for reasons unknown, and have complained to some of the commitee members. So just to clarify matters and maybe to stop these moans and groans to the commitee. Its me who is responsible for the articles in Beetalk and also the website and that if there are any comments both positive or otherwise it is to me alone that they should be addressed too*

*Best wishes*

*Michael Editor*

# Association Meetings

## Sunday 20th June

*The meeting on Sunday 20th June was held at the home of Brian & Margaret Jackson at Crosshills.*

*The speaker at the meeting was Ken Pickles from Wharfedale who gave us an informative talk on the plight of honeybees & some of the challenges of keeping bees in the north of England.*

*47 people attended the meeting & we had lovely sunny weather so we were able to listen to Ken Pickles outside in the garden at the Jacksons'.*

*Once Ken had completed his talk John Zamorski showed everyone a “dodgy” brood comb which he had brought along & we had to guess what the problems were with it. After he had shown the comb to the gathering & had invited comments, John revealed that as well as evidence of chalk brood, the comb revealed a **Drone Laying Queen** as it contained only drone brood and the brood was in a sporadic pattern.*

*A number of people had brought their veils or suits & went to look at the bees in the apiary as Brian's hives were opened up at the end of Ken's talk.*

*Afterwards we all enjoyed the wonderful homemade cakes & goodies kindly provided by Margaret along with a cup of tea or coffee.*

*Thanks must go to Brian & Margaret for the generous hospitality that they shared with us all.*

## Sunday 18th July.

*An excellent meeting was held at the home of David and Angela Bush with our guest speaker John Zamorski. David had worked very hard putting up awnings and seating to help us shelter from the torrential cloud bursts. John gave an excellent talk on the various ways one can combat the dreaded varroa mite. Most people were amazed at the different ways possible to eradicate these pests, some legal some not!!! John knows all the latest products on the market available and whilst not recommending any particular method there was at least one that would have suited any of the 50 members attending. He certainly knows his stuff and answered questions with the alacrity that we have come to expect of him. Caroline handed out the Honey Show Schedule so could you start to think about this now in order that we have a good number of entries to make it the usual success that this show has now become. Our Chairman Brian expressed our thanks to Angela and David for the hard work and generous hospitality shown to all.*

*Pauline.*

## Sunday 15th August

*Our main speaker at our venue at Salmebury Village Hall was Michael Badger MBE. who as been past president of the BBKA. He gave an excellent lecture on Beekeeping through out the year, which was accompanied by a power point presentation. A very interesting lecture from a very knowledgeable man. After the talk questions and answers were taken. Tea , Coffee and Biscuits were provided by Caroline and we all had a great afternoon. Thanks to Caroline for all her endeavours.*

*At the meeting John Zamorski informed us that he was retiring as our secretary at the AGM on Sunday the 14th of November. We are therefore looking for a new secretary , it could even be a shared job between two people if necessary. John is willing to give assistance and help until the new person or persons are settled in. So please think about becoming the secretary, no need to be an experienced beekeeper*

*Michael*



# Minutes of Committee Meeting Sunday 20th June 2010

Location : Brian Jacksons Home

Members present:-

*P.Ainsworth, W.Ainsworth, D.Bush, R.Dempster, A.Hawkins, K.Ramsbottom, D.Rayner, P.Roberts, V.Winstanley, J.Zamorski B.Jackson, Caroline Couglin.*

*John opened the meeting and explained that the only point on the agenda was the mentoring scheme. The reason for this is that there has been many email discussions around this subject and we needed to view our thoughts and concerns to move this forward.*

*We as a committee agreed that we will be implementing a mentoring scheme, this will enable new beekeepers to have the support (telephone, face to face) of a buddy who will introduce them to the basics of Beekeeping and support/advise if they have any concerns.*

How will this work

*Mentors will be identified and will be given approx 5/6 individuals who live within the area of the mentor. There will be a database managed by Vici Winstanley who will ensure the individuals are placed with a mentor within the local area.*

*The information that Michael Birt put together will be given to new beekeepers as a reference guide/ checklist of what is required to be a competent Beekeeper.*

Actions

*VW will put together an email to send to all members informing them of the mentoring scheme and how to utilise this great opportunity either to mentor or be mentored*

*MB to put this information on the website*

*PA to provide VW with a list of all members*

*PA to change the membership form to include the mentoring scheme*

Other Business

*Caroline confirmed that the Honey show had been booked for the 3rd October 2010 at Samlesbury Village and that Helen Howarth has been confirmed as the Speaker and Michael Badger as the Judge.*

*Dave Rayner confirmed that he has been thinking of resigning, however this is something that needs more thought and will be discussed at the next meeting.*

*There was also a discussion around how we make decisions as a committee and also review information between meetings. We all agreed to be more mindful of all our preferred methods of communication and ensure this is taken into account.*

*Bill Ainsworth discussed that he had been in contact with Offshoots at Townley Hall, Burnley and we can use their facilities free for our monthly meeting as long as we support in assuring the success of the Bee's hives they currently have. All were in favour and Bill will discuss this in more detail and update the committee*

*John Z to order the Basic Beekeeping kit (training materials) for the committee which will be utilised by the education officer Dave Rayner.*

Minutes of Committee Meeting 15th August 2010  
Salisbury Village Hall 12.15pm

1.

*Members Present :-*

*D.Bush,C.Coughlin,R.Dempster,A.Hawkins,B.Jackson,K.Ramsbottom,D.Rayner,J.Wilson,V.Winstanley,J.Zamorski.*

2.

*Apologies:- P.Ainsworth,W.Ainsworth,P.Roberts.*

3.

*There were no minutes read out at the beginning of the meeting and the committee discussed the moving forward of the mentoring scheme to be introduced next year. Vici was chosen to be the person to try and co-ordinate this task. It was to be announced at the branch meeting that anyone wishing to be a mentor or to be mentored was to give their names to her. David would notify the people who were taking his courses.*

4.

*Brian Jackson announced to the Committee that John Zamorski did not intend to stand for re-election as Secretary at the next AGM in November. This would also be announced to the branch meeting later and a request for someone to step forward would be made.*

5.

*There were some discussions about the excellent website run by Michael. This and Beetalk have a large following around the country. Brian and John were going to speak to Michael when he came home.*

6.

*The Honey Show Schedule was discussed and copies were to be given out to members later.*

7.

*There being no further business the meeting was closed at 1.25pm*

## *Wanted*

*John Zamorski who is also the seasonal bee inspector for our area as, due to other commitments decided to resign as the secretary of our club. We therefore need someone to fill in his shoes it could even be a shared job between two people if necessary. John is willing to give assistance and help until the new person or persons are settled in. So please think about becoming the secretary, no need to be an experienced beekeeper. I hope, and ask on behalf of the committee that the position will be filled and that we wish thank John and wish him all the very best in what he does in the future.*

*Our Member Bob Fulton and some of our other Members at Sunnyhurst Woods Open Day.*



*Maybe 2 more for the club*



*Bob talking to 2 future beekeepers*



*Bob and Vici looking the buzziness*



*Jean and Vici deep in thought*



*Bob and some of our member with the display on bees and beekeeping*



*Maybe we have a new member in the mayor*



## **BRITON SENDS BEE WORLD ABUZZ WITH CURE FOR KILLER BUG**

By John Ingham, Environment Editor, Daily Express



A BRITISH expert may have found the cure to a parasite that is wiping out honeybees worldwide.

Retired heating engineer Ron Hoskins is breeding bees that groom themselves – and kill deadly mites in the process.

Varroa mites have slaughtered billions of bees. They entered the UK in 1992 and have become resistant to chemical treatments.

The British Beekeepers' Association says members last year lost 17 per cent of colonies, with varroa a major cause.

But Mr Hoskins, 79, says his selective breeding has produced “spectacular results”. In 1999 when he first stopped using chemical treatments because they were harming the bees, he lost half his hives to varroa. But in the past two years he and his friends in Swindon, Wiltshire, have suffered “almost zero” losses.

It happened after he spotted one of his hives had far fewer varroa deaths. He found that these bees had successfully groomed each other, removing and killing the mites.

He now artificially inseminates queen bees to produce the Swindon Honeybee strain which has inherited the grooming trait. They also remove larvae infected by the mites.

Ron said: “This could be our only hope of saving the bee. I want to redevelop the British bee so it can protect itself against these varroa mites. If the world’s bees die out, we die out. Humans are reliant on bees for pollinating crops and plants which produce oxygen.”

BBKA president Martin Smith said “This could be the solution and it is exciting to hear about his progress.”

## *Our Stand at Darwen Gala*



*On the way to the Gala*



*Setting up the stall*



*Starting to get busy*



*In Full Swing*



*Bob deep in conversation*



*This is what we need::::: young keen up and coming Beekeepers*

*A lovely day out at darwebn Gala with a few of our members, who set up a stall to promote bees and beekeeping. Thanks to everyone who attented and to those who did not, you missed a great day out.*



## Beginners Pages

### Swarm Collecting

*Collecting a swarm has got to be one of the most satisfying parts of beekeeping, especially if it's large and not one of yours. There it is hanging from a single branch, five feet off the ground, one tap and a cup of tea later and you've boxed a swarm and have the best machine known to man for drawing out the much needed comb.*

*But what if it's hanging ten feet up a tree, or it's integrated in the soffit and the gutter?*

*There are a thousand different scenarios that bees can get themselves into.*

*In today's world of health and safety and the 'you sue me, I'll sue you' culture that we live in, are you sure that the British Beekeepers Association insurance will cover you for any mishap? It will definitely not cover you for personal injury and was the swarm worth six weeks off work with a broken ankle?*

*The insurance says it covers you for beekeeping activities including swarm collection, but we all know when it's time to pay up insurance companies have a tendency to bring out the rule book and the small print.*

*Were you qualified to remove the roof tile, that caused a leak, that ruined the roof, that collapsed the ceiling, that fell on the owner - who was very grateful when you removed the swarm but can see a large payout coming his way?*

*Was the ladder you used the correct one for working in that environment? It may well have been good enough when you fixed your own gutter but did it comply with the British Standard for anything other than personal use on your property? When it slipped and went through the conservatory or the windscreen of the new Jaguar car, were you trained to work at height? (That one came in during 2005).*

*We then we come to the really grey area of having to dispatch a swarm or a colony that have established themselves in a chimney or roof and there isn't a viable way to get them out other than to use a chemical of some kind. Wasp killer will do it, but unless you're registered and trained you will only be able to get amateur use only and using that on someone else's property is it still deemed as amateur? What if you have killed the bees, do you know what the legislation insists you do then? A qualified pest controller was fined £15,000 in 2008 for not following the correct procedure.*

*I am not trying to put anyone off collecting swarms but please be aware of the possible consequences that may or could happen, people always appear so grateful when you get the swarm, but when it's all over they then start to think differently!*

*Don't put yourself in the firing line and please don't put yourselves at risk.*

*If in doubt don't let your ego get the better of you, tell the occupier to phone a qualified pest controller who specialises in wasps and bees including bumble bees.*

*With thanks to Wiltshire BKA and e-bees*



## *THYMOL TREATMENT RECIPE .*

*Hertfordshire BKA*

*If you have run out of the proprietary thymol treatment, here is a tried and tested recipe if you wish to make it yourself.*

*Ingredients (sufficient for about 12 colonies)*

- 100 grams thymol crystals (handle with care - avoid skin contact)*
- 200 grams PURA or other pure vegetable fat (no additives, preservatives or emulsifiers)*
- 700 grams castor sugar*

*Melt the PURA in a saucepan and allow it to cool until warm to the touch. Put the castor sugar into a plastic container and thoroughly mix in the thymol crystals until all lumps are broken down. Add the sugar/thymol mixture to the melted fat and mix thoroughly until the mixture is the consistency of a paste. If well sealed the mixture may be stored in the bottom of a refrigerator for up to 12 months.*

*Usage*

*On a piece of grease-proof paper about 10cm x 15cm spread the mixture so that it is about 5mm thick and place on top of the brood frames. The crown board should allow a bee space above the paste. All ventilation should be closed except a 10cm wide entrance. Refresh the mixture every two weeks until the drop falls below 2-3 mites per week. The ambient temperature needs to be above about 15°C unless the hive is insulated.*

*Expanded polystyrene (about 25mm thick) works well and can be left on all winter.*

*Note: Do not apply the treatment whilst the supers are still on. It is also advisable to remove excess winter stores in the spring before the bees transfer it into the supers.*

## RECIPE FOR FONDANT 1945 Yorkshire BKA handbook

The old fashioned wording has been kept as in the original article.

5lb or 5 pints of cane sugar, 1 pint of water, half level teaspoon full cream of tartar. Place water in pan and bring to boil, add sugar and cream of tartar. Boil very slowly until every grain is dissolved, then boil more briskly continually stirring until 2350F is reached if a thermometer is used, or when the contents rise up in foam and bubbles. Allow this to continue for two minutes. To test if boiled sufficiently without using a thermometer, drop a little syrup on a cool surface such as a plate. If it does not stick to the fingers when pressed in and withdrawn it is boiled sufficiently, but should it stick to the fingers it should be boiled again for half a minute and again tested. Remove from fire and allow to cool. Whilst cooling the contents should not be stirred. When the temperature reaches 1370F or when a thin crust of sugar is beginning to form on top, it should be stirred briskly and should soon turn creamy and stiff, when it can be placed in moulds. To make good candy with a nice smooth grain, it is essential that the early part of the process be not hurried.

## ARE HERBS THE ANSWER?

*beekeeper had been collecting honey from an herb garden for many years. He always bragged that his hives were Varroa free. When he asked the Bee's Officer why this was, the inspector replied laconically, "It's only a matter of thyme, son!"*



## Topical Tips

*By Peter Edwards of Stratford-Upon-Avon & District  
BKA, Courtesy of eBees*

*What do you do if your honey has started to granulate in the comb? The first thing is – do not even attempt to spin it out, as this will*

*certainly result in the comb disintegrating and the off-balance load will not do the extractor any good at all.*

*Instead, it will be necessary*

*to melt the honey to recover it from the wax. How? Well that will depend on the scale of your operation. I have a large heated uncapping*

*tank, so am able to either scrape combs back to the midrib if they are not too hard, or cut out the whole comb; the honey is then*

*gently melted in the tank and separated from the wax.*

*I use a stainless steel hive tool that I keep in the honey house to scrape down the*

*comb – it is also good for uncapping the bits that the uncapping knife misses or can even be used instead of an uncapping knife – try it.*

*On a small scale, you could put the ‘mush’ of honey and wax into a container (perhaps a honey bucket) and put it in a warming cabinet*

*so that only the honey melts. Allow to cool and then pour off the honey. You will need a temperature of about 48°C for 24 hours. No*

*warming cabinet? Improve one using a light bulb as the heat source.*

*A tip about cleaning up equipment: if you put hot water anywhere near wax or propolis you will end up with them smeared over*

*everything! Instead, use cold water to wash away the wax and propolis first – then you can use hot soapy water for the final clean up*

### An Incubator

*Many of you will know that I dabble in some off-beat bee research on my shoestring budget... I have a project to produce microscope slides of serial sections of honey bees.*

*In order to achieve this I have to do some precision melting of paraffin wax and beeswax mixtures. And for this I need a laboratory incubator with the*

*following specification:*

*One or two cu. ft. capacity*

*Fridge like construction*

*Temperature range – ambient to 70 oC*

*Thermostat differential as low as possible (0.1 oC would be ideal)*

*If anyone has such a device that they would part with inexpensively, I would be very grateful.*

*Please contact: dave.cushman@lineone.net.*

## A Tricky Swarm

*By Peter Edwards of Stratford-Upon-Avon & District  
BKA, Courtesy of eBees*

*Some swarms are easy to take – but others seem determined to present a challenge! This one was hanging on a wild rose growing from the steep sides of a drainage ditch that was roughly eight feet down to water level – and with an unknown depth of water in it. It was clear that if I fell in then it was going to be very difficult to get out!*

*I did wonder whether to use the winch cable on the Land Rover to get myself down to it, but in the end I settled for getting one foot on to the root of the rose and then lopping off the branch with the swarm. Using loppers is a two-handed job – and one of my hands was holding the branch with the swarm on it. I managed by putting one handle against my leg and then using the spare hand to operate the other handle. Of course, the swarm had settled on an old, very thick and hard branch so there was quite a jolt when I finally cut through it. About half the swarm took to the air, but fortunately the queen must have remained and I was able to transfer them to a waiting hive.*

*This was a large mating swarm and yesterday we were pleased to find sealed brood in the hive. Unfortunately Sue was unable to help as she was too busy with the camera – and hoping that I would fall in the water!*

### Seasonal jottings: feed – treat – feed

*Once I have taken off my summer honey in late July/early August, I usually feed my colonies about ½ a gallon of thick sugar syrup (2lb to a pint of water). This stimulates the queen to continue laying and also wears out the oldest bees so promoting a colony with as many young bees as possible ready for the winter. After the feed and not at the same time, in August, I do my Apiguard treatment. (You should not feed whilst treating with Apiguard). Early September I then do my winter feeding with thick syrup to ensure all colonies have enough winter stores. Note: If you started with a 5 frame nucleus earlier in the year, make sure that all the combs in the brood box have been pulled out and contain either stores (honey/sugar syrup and or pollen) and brood. Frames of foundation are no good to the bees over the winter.*

*With thanks to John Randall  
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BEEKEEPERS  
ASSOCIATION and e Bees*

## More Beginners Stuff

### *Managing Hives (part 1)*

*Richard Alabone (Mr Beesy)*

*Experience is the main way we learn hive management. Much can be learnt working with an experienced beekeeper, though classes and a book are a good start. These notes are intended to cover points seldom discussed in classes or books and are generally learnt by experience. Starting with a nuc, in about June, it should build up by September with enough bees to go safely through to spring. But don't let a small box get overcrowded or they may try to swarm. Get them into a big box as soon as possible. A National can be transferred into a full brood box, but you are better off with Commercial or 14 x 12 (jumbo National). Put any frames without brood to the outside to wean the colony on to the new frames, and feed of course. To my mind the best type of feeder to use is a 1 gallon contact feeder. Put in the 3kg of sugar and fill with hot water; it's quick and easy and goes straight on the hive when cool. Making up bulk feed is generally more trouble than it's worth, except 6 kg in a 30lb honey bucket. When it comes to feeding a pollen patty in spring there are some problems. Generally it tends to go mouldy before the bees use most of it. Perhaps sodium benzoate in the mixture would help avoid mould. Beware too soft a mix; I have seen a hive where it all ran down between the frames, almost ruining the colony. Bees tend to manage perfectly well without any pollen substitute.*

*When building up a colony, make sure the queen always has somewhere to lay. A frame of stores, or a scruffy old frame, will stop egg laying, so make sure there is empty comb or foundation next to the nest. In summer full frames of stores are best replaced with foundation next to the brood nest, which should soon be drawn out depending on nectar availability. June is sometimes regarded as a problem, referred to as the June gap, but if there are lime trees about there can be a great bonanza and an explosion of brood. But when I fed a colony of New Zealand bees in June, they died of starvation in July! The siting of hives causes some queries Facing north or under trees being regarded as undesirable, but I don't think it matters a jot. Bees do well on the edge of a wood – but not actually in the wood. Car access, away from home, is more important, but at home there can be noticeable spots on washing or light cars, especially if the bees get dysentery, which won't amuse the neighbours when they realise the cause. You can spend much time unnecessarily cleaning up the outside of frames. Only the tops of top bars are a must, and they are pretty easy to clean in situ. When I started, I unnecessarily cleaned underneath the lugs and the ends, but generally only the hive rebate needs cleaning. All too often the bee space between sidebar and the hive is too small so that it gets propolised. This is a design problem which we are stuck with; but try to ensure frames are square when new foundation is fitted. Propolis problems with queen excluder and crown board are lessened by the application of Vaseline, or even thick oil on new wood. Having used glass crown boards (quilts) for many years I've learnt to like them, but also, how to clean them. Detergent and water removes dirt, but it needs white spirit to clean wax, and meths for the propolis. Then a final detergent and water completes the job. Hives sometimes need to be moved, and the 3ft or 3 mile rule need not be taken too seriously. I have found that about 5% of bees fly off anyway and get lost, or go back home if they had been moved only a quarter of a mile. Where they are moved say a 100 yards, they generally realise and go back to the hive, but moving bees successively 3 feet at a time is a disaster, as you lose 5 - 10% on each move. Small colonies can just be closed up and moved, if it's not too hot, in the evening or early morning, and a large colony needs a screen. Perhaps a varroa floor is sufficient, but we used to use a mesh top screen. A hive strap is all that is needed – clever locking slides are unnecessary. Two people can carry a hive easily, with two 18 inch carrying handles, fixed to ropes 4ft 6 inches long. Pass the ropes under the hive, with a handle each side. WBC's can be moved by placing the brood box on a piece of ply with a crown board or screen on the top, taking all the other bits separately. To move a complete hive, with the entrance closed, is hazardous, but it can be done. We are told that floors need cleaning every year. Not really – and nowadays many hives are fitted with a varroa floor. Old WBC floors used to get clogged up as the bee space was too small at the back, and this became infested with fleas, which could be extremely irritating! So that's a good reason to check the floor.*

*Part two below on the next page*

*These notes cover points seldom seen in books or mentioned in beekeeping classes. Many beekeepers tend to add too many supers, and the end up with half filled frames and boxes. I always have an empty super over the crown board which has a hole in the middle. As soon as the top super is full, bees start to fill the spare one via the hole, so then just reverse the crown board and super, or better still put the top super under the others. There are several things to consider before removing supers and clearing bees. I always take a whole super, but it is possible to take just the capped or ripe frames that do not drop nectar when shaken. A clearer board can clear the bees in 24 hours, but this means that the honey will not extract well, unless warmed. I tend to use a clearer for 12 hours which removes most of the bees, then the shake and brush the rest. Of course some bees don't seem to find a porter escape anyway, while others all scuttle through in a few hours. You never can tell; but the same colony will probably be the same next time. If you take supers away in the car you may find bees in the car while travelling, but they are only interested in getting out, and will not sting unless inadvertently squashed. Crown boards are often supplied without a porter escape hole which is OK for winter, preferably with foam insulation glued on. In summer a hole is best, to allow ventilation to ripen honey and to be used with a porter escape, but most roofs are sold having very minimal ventilation and in summer need to be raised off the crown board by about 3mm. Another use for a crown board, with a hole, is for clearing granulated honey from comb, or clearing stores from old frames before melting out the wax. Put the frames in a spare box with the roof on top, or in a WBC just place them vertically on the crown board. End boards need a few words. Getting the first brood frame out can be difficult due to propolis and can roll bees in a crowded hive, but end boards are no use if crammed against the end frame and the hive, as this defeats the object. In order to avoid rolling bees the end board should be a good bee space from the hive and half a bee space from the end frame. This way the board can be moved against the hive, and then taken out. It's even better with two boards, the one against the hive to be removed first, followed by the second. The first should be slightly greased and the second is best with pads to create a full bee space with the end frame. Before the days of varroa, continental beekeepers recommended OMFs (open mesh floors) which were supposed to help ventilation and be generally a good thing. I tried to find out why! I was told that it's good to stop inefficient brood rearing from December to February which loses bees and stores, so that the colony has a good start in March, or when it really warms up. OMF floors are now renamed varroa floors, so it might be a good thing to leave the varroa tray out from December to February, but in cold and windy weather bees sometimes die in hundreds where there is a cold draught into the bottom of the hive. The over emphasis of bee disease to new beekeepers tends to put them off beekeeping. EFB is a problem of old brood comb. I found that if you exchange the comb it goes away, but suddenly the BBKA have discovered the 'shook swarm' which is the same thing! AFB is a different matter, but we never been struck by lightning, and AFB is as rare as lightning. Nosema can build up to a problem especially with the new Nosema Cerana, but now Fumidil B is being phased out, probably rightly, we now can apply Nosevit, which is only pence per treatment, and promises to be very good! 2010 will tell me if it works: again the best antidote is new wax. Other problems like chalkbrood, various viruses and chilled brood, come and go and are best forgotten. Bees manage very well without the beekeeper worrying too much about their health. When our initial enthusiasm wears off, bees have to look after themselves a bit more. The beekeeper who has gained enough experience has learned what has to be done and can leave other things to chance. Having studied and practiced this 'let alone' approach, it has given me more time off, to do other things in beekeeping, as well as sometimes giving me too much honey. One thing that has to be done is to avoid wax moth in valuable comb. It can be stored in plastic bags with PDB, which you're not supposed to use – or buy, and will be OK unless there are eggs to start with, but the comb needs a good airing before use; perhaps for a month. July and August are the bad months for wax moth as they will destroy a box of brood comb before you even notice. By spacing the frames  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch apart the worst of their ravages can be avoided, because they need heat which they generate by putting a silk web into a normal bee space. Queenless bees will sometimes not protect against greater wax moth attack. To end with, here is something about the bees themselves. Every colony is different, even with sister queen's, because the mix of the drones parentage, will give an individual mix of characteristics to every colony. We tend to only notice the stingers or swarmy bees, but there are many more noticeable traits. For example, variation in brood pattern, ability to make tidy comb with nice pollen and honey arches, not too much brace comb or propolis and some will make beautiful white smooth cappings over honey. Other traits we notice are things like general hive cleanliness, ability to groom varroa, colony defence, robbing and susceptibility to various diseases. The light coloured bees show a noticeable difference to darker bees in the ability to stand the cold and they use more stores, they produce more wax and it's harder, they are poor groomers of varroa and they generally require more attention in this country than their darker cousins, so although they exhibit the same range of traits, they are better suited to warm climates. This mix of variable characteristics ensures that bees can make the best of any circumstances, by survival of the fittest. I believe that this extreme variability in the characteristics of bees was how the species evolved to be so adaptable and so successful.*

*With thanks to Essex Beekeepers Association and e-bees*



## Extracting

I must mention a few points that, although they may seem peripheral to extracting should be kept in mind. I do so because over the years they have been brought to my notice, particularly so, by newer members to the craft. They are viscosity; hygroscopicity; thixotrophy and fermentation. Viscosity refers to the resistance to flow of a liquid. It is of practical importance to the beekeeper as where it is high it makes for difficulty in extracting from the comb; it slows the rate of filtering and subsequent clarification (the rising of the inevitable trapped bubbles) in the ripening tank. To overcome this and lower the viscosity during the above mentioned operations, the supers, on removal from the hives, should be kept in a warm place and, ideally extracted quickly. I aim to do so the afternoon/evening of the day of removal. Where is this warm place? For myself - not a typical of most beekeepers with a few hives, I manage very well in my kitchen. It captures all the sun from about mid-day until just before sunset and with a little adjustment, 80°F is easy to maintain.

Hygroscopicity of a substance refers to removal of moisture from the air. Ripe honey, i.e. 18% H<sub>2</sub>O is a strong solution and can do this - osmosis really. Therefore, honey should spend the minimum of time out of sealed containers. Honey is 'safe' when fully 'ripe' and capped but where there are areas of comb not capped and left exposed even if 'ripe', these may or can attract moisture thus raising the H<sub>2</sub>O above 18% and so becoming 'attractive' to the yeasts which cause fermentation.

Thixotropy - seen, as far as my experience goes - only in ling honey. Here the honey forms a soft gel and won't spin out of the comb. It has to be removed from the frames, put in scrim bags and then pressed out. A slow process but a unique product. When bottled the gel characteristic persists and the air bubbles remain scattered throughout. I had twenty-seven years of 'heather' going on the Fells in the Blanchland area of Northumberland.

Fermentation. I have seen this in combs stored where humidity must have been on the high side and too large a percentage of comb not capped - also in jars offered for sale on at least three occasions. This is caused by yeasts (fungi) under the generic name *zygosaccharomyces*. It seems that the spores are present in the honey bee environment, from the flower, nectar and within the hive and can germinate and grow in strong sugar solutions right through the processing of the nectar up until it becomes honey and ripe, 18% H<sub>2</sub>O, and capped - osmotic pressure then 'rules'. During this period our wonderful insect produces two sterilants from the enzyme Glucose oxidase to keep the fungus in check.

Granulation occurs when the sugars go out of solution. A characteristic of Oil Seed Rape honey. The rule here is a simple one - get all the Spring honey extracted by the end of May - Autumn sown OSR has finished flowering by then. As I said earlier, I like to extract as quickly as possible after it comes from the hive - end of May then again the end of July. This invariably means getting honey from the comb before granulation might or will start. It is well worth making something of a study of the aforementioned points. What I have said is much abridged. One other point - a little tip really. I find uncapping so much easier when combs in the supers are 'wide spaced' i.e. nine to a box. When I have drawn comb I simply space the nine by eye. Where I have to start with foundation i.e. eleven frames to a box, I remove one frame when they're partly drawn then a second a week or so later - before any are capped, leaving nine again spaced by eye. When uncapping such frames the knife runs just under the cappings but is well clear of the wooden frame. Just one other point - when putting frames into the centrifugal extractor make sure they go in in the right way!



*This honey is quite ripe.*



*As the frames turn anti-clockwise in this tangential extractor, the honey will be thrown out as the cells are slightly tilted upwards.*

*With thanks to Jack Cox NDB & L&DBKA*

A good parallel-wire queen excluder has a sturdy frame providing a bee-space on one side only. If you use a bottom bee-space hive, like the National or WBC, the excluder's bee-space must be underneath, and if you use a top bee-space hive, like the Smith, Langstroth or Dadant, the excluder bee space must be on top. It is more expensive to buy than the 'sheet' type but with reasonable care it will last a lifetime. When considering which type of excluder to use, the restriction of hive ventilation must be considered. When nectar is first stored in the supers, it has a high moisture content, which must be reduced during the process of converting it into honey. This process becomes more difficult if the excluder forms a partial barrier to the free flow of air. The slotted zinc or slotted plastic excluder has many drawbacks. Beekeepers usually use it by laying it directly on top of the frames of the brood chamber, where it has to be peeled off during inspections, with the constant risk of distortion (not to mention undue annoyance to the bees). The excluder will have been comprehensively attached to the frame-tops with propolis or brace comb, which will have to be removed, or it will prevent the excluder being laid back in position. If the sheet excluder is framed to avoid this, it will tend to sag and again encourage brace comb. - Ed. If the excluder is merely lying on top of the frames it forms a barrier, both to the bees and the circulation of air, because bees and air can only pass through the slots which lie between the frame tops. The slots which cover the top bars might as well not be there. In addition, only the slots which have their short dimension fully clear of frames will allow worker bees to pass through. To reduce the effects of this, the excluder should be placed with the slots at right angles to the frames, if the brood-chamber dimensions allow this flexibility, i.e. the brood chamber is square. Sheet excluders can be purchased 'short slot' or 'long slot'. The long slot marginally increases access and ventilation but it does so at the expense of reliability in excluding queens and drones. Overcrowding of bees is recognised to be a barrier to ventilation and to the distribution of queen substance, thus leading to the onset of swarming. Not every beekeeper can recognise crowding. A well-made framed wire queen excluder. Note that the wires are flush with the top of the frame—the beespace in this case (on a bottom bee-space hive) is underneath. A cheap sheet-metal queen excluder lies on top of the frames in a bottom bee-space hive. Note that the slots run at 90 to the frames, thereby providing the maximum space for bees (and air) to pass through. in a colony. If bees are occupying all the space available to them, then they are overcrowded even although they seem to have enough room to move about. They do not need to be thick on the comb in the brood chamber or supers to be overcrowded. Since temperature, the need for space to 'hang nectar out to dry' and other considerations determine the number of uncrowded bees on a comb face it is not feasible to use the number of bees per unit area as a measure of crowding. Severe overcrowding is obvious but the uncrowded colony can only be distinguished by the presence within it of some unoccupied comb space. Bees will occupy more comb space in hot weather than in cool weather so it is better to give them more room than seems necessary if they are examined on a cool day. When a single brood chamber is crammed wall to wall with bees, it is overcrowded. It requires part of another brood chamber or, at the very least, a super to be added. The number-one purpose of a super is for accommodating bees. Supers are needed whether or not there is any surplus honey. The bees are programmed to appreciate if extra space is available should it be required. If that extra space is not available the seeds of swarming will be sown. Honey-supers can consist of boxes having the same-sized frames as those in the brood-chamber or, more usually, shallower frames. In the use of National or Smith hives, these shallow supers are capable of holding 11-13 kg of honey and are much easier to lift than "deep supers" (i.e. brood-boxes used as supers). I would recommend the use of Hoffman self-spacing frames in the brood chamber, but these frames in a super are a waste of money: the spacing projections on the sides of the frames are a hindrance when uncapping and they do not easily allow a wider spacing to be employed. I would also recommend brood-chamber frames of the DN5 type consisting of a 26mm wide top bar—which reduces the incidence of brace comb being built between the frames. I use the excellent SN1 shallow frames, which are made of 22.5mm wide wood, in my supers. The frames, when newly fitted with wired wax foundation, are set apart using narrow plastic spacers 36.5mm wide (or 11-slot castellated runners can be used—Ed.). A National super holds eleven of these frames. If frames with foundation are spaced more than 41mm apart, there is a likelihood that the bees will draw combs between some of the sheets and make a hopeless mess. When correctly spaced, the bees will draw the foundation into perfect combs which will, hopefully, be filled with honey and capped. These frames are then extracted, given back to the bees to clean up, and stored in their supers for future use. In subsequent years the plastic spacers can be removed and the frames put on to 'wide spacing' using nine-slot castellated spacers. A Hoffmann self-spacing frame. Castellated spacers fixed in a super. Castellated spacers should never be used in the brood chamber as they prevent frames being slid along the hive runners, away from each other before being lifted out. (Forcing a frame vertically upwards can cause damage to the comb-face, particularly catastrophic if you then discover you have ruined your only decent queen cell! - Ed.). Full supers containing nine combs will contain more honey than those containing eleven because there are only ten passage ways between the combs instead of twelve. The combs will be fatter, heavier and easier to uncap. If you have 100 supers to extract you will have only to handle 900 frames instead of 1100, which is a saving in cost and time for beekeepers with a large number of hives.



*The first super should be added, above a queen excluder, when the bees are starting to occupy the inside face of the outside combs in the brood chamber. If a wire excluder is in use and the first super consists of drawn comb, I have not experienced any difficulty in getting bees to enter the super. When the bees (not necessarily honey) are occupying two thirds of the first super, a second should be given. This second super can be of foundation. If it is, it should be placed below the first where the bees are forced to pass into it to reach the super in which they are already working. Also, the direct heat from the brood chamber will assist in getting the foundation drawn. One of the aims of supering is to relieve congestion in the brood nest. Bottom supering helps to do that because bees will occupy the new super faster than they might if it had been placed on top. Remember that bees only draw foundation when there is a honey flow. If it is given at other times they will tend to chew and make holes in it. The foundation must be fresh from a sealed packet. If it has been on a colony the previous year and stored undrawn, try heating it gently with a hair-drier to remove 'blooming' and raise its aroma. Bees tend to seal honey from the top downwards. This, together with bottom supering means that the sealed honey will be found in the top super, where it can be inspected and removed more easily. It should be remembered that a super full of sealed honey has less room for bees than an empty one, because the inter-comb space has been reduced. If such supers are at the top of the pile, the state of crowding may not be apparent until these supers are taken off as there may only be guard bees in them. If there are a lot of bees in a full and sealed super, the probable reason is that they are overcrowded. In light of the preceding discussions, plenty of super room should be available in late spring and early summer to reduce the pressure on swarming. Towards the end of the honey season, surplus super-room is less desirable and should be reduced in order to try to encourage the bees to concentrate, ripen and seal the honey which they have collected. Partially completed frames or supers can be given to stronger hives to complete. If the beekeeper is likely to be on holiday or at work for an extended period in late spring to early summer, two shallow supers can be given at the same time. If they are given as top supers, a sheet of polythene which has a 30mm space cut all round can be placed between the supers (or a crown-board with open holes). This will conserve heat and the bees will go around the edges of the polythene if they need to enter the second super. The polythene should be removed at a convenient later date.*



*A well-made framed wire queen excluder. Note that the wires are flush with the top of the frame—the beespace in this case (on a bottom bee-space hive) is underneath.*



*A cheap sheet-metal queen excluder lies on top of the frames in a bottom bee-space hive. Note that the slots run at 90 to the frames, thereby providing the maximum space for bees (and air) to pass through.*



*A Hoffmann self-spacing frame.*



*Castellated spacers fixed in a super.*



## Bait Hives

Many of our newly joined members are first-time beekeepers who are not yet in possession of bees. Given the current cost of a 5-frame nucleus (anything up to £150) you might like to be ready for the possibility of picking up a passing swarm. The way to do this is to set up a 'bait-hive', which may tempt some bees looking for a new home to come their way. When a colony is preparing to swarm, scout bees will be out looking for a good looking billet – that is, one that looks, feels and smells right to them. The ideal quality of such a home is it should be big enough for both the bees and for the food they will need to store for survival, such as a typical broodbox. It will be even more tempting if it has previously contained bees – the lingering odours of honey and wax will be an extra incentive for them to choose your offering, especially if you can also furnish it with two or three old combs (in reasonable condition). Of course, you may have no choice but to use a new hive and some foundation if that is all you have, but the 'second-hand' stock will usually have the edge for this particular purpose. Find a cool spot for the hive to wait in. Many beekeepers recommend positioning it as high up as you can manage (e.g. 2 – 3 metres above ground). It is true that scouting bees can often be seen inspecting possible residences at or above head level (chimney pots are a favourite) but personally I have not found that to be necessary. Check your hive regularly (you will soon see if bees have arrived by the activity at the entrance). If you are lucky enough to lure a swarm then exchange the old comb for new foundation and, after about three days, put on a feeder with 1 weak (1:1) sugar solution. A good swarm is a combdrawing 'machine' and within a week or so will have made astonishing progress in making your hive fit to live in. At this point you may already find eggs being laid and then you must be ready to add further combs as the colony expands up to its full size. On the other hand you may have collected a 'cast' with a virgin queen. In this case you will have to wait longer while she mates with your local drones (there will be some waiting you can be sure) and then comes into lay in your hive. Be patient and keep to a weekly inspection pattern. Too much intrusion, especially with a virgin queen, can put them off the whole enterprise.

Good luck!

With thanks to Shropshire BKA

## English Cedar

The following item was seen in Ludlow BKA's May Newsletter. The observations were prompted by seeing a new hive described as being made with English Cedar wood. (Reprinted courtesy of eBEES)

The name cedar is used for a number of trees whose timber usually has a pleasant scent resembling somewhat, that of the 'true' cedars. The word cedar is really a 'common' name and, like such names in plant nomenclature can be rather misleading. There isn't an English Cedar - that is, a species indigenous to England. There are, however, numerous cedars growing here- all introduced.

The tree cedars belong to the genus *Cedrus* - they have common names too, viz:

*Himalayan or Deodar - Cedrus deodara*

*Atlas Cedar - Cedrus atlantica\**

*Cedar of Lebanon - Cedrus libani\**

seen mostly as solitary specimens in parkland or arboretums. I suspect the 'English Cedar' refers to timber of one of these species. Doubtful if it is readily available, probably only when an odd tree has been felled.

The timber known as Western Red Cedar, widely used in the manufacture of hives, is from a species of thuja - *Thuja plicata*, native of the NW mainly coastal region of the U.S. There are in Britain, recorded specimens of this tree well in excess of 100 ft, but timber used for hives is probably all imported. Other conifers enjoying the name cedar include:

*Eastern Red Cedar - Juniperus virginiana\**

*Incense Cedar - Calocedrus decurrens*

*Yellow Cedar - Chamaecyparis nootkatensis\**

*Japanese Cedar - Cryptomania japonica\**

- encountered, in my experience, much as the true cedars are and not in plantations for timber production as for example we see Norway and Sitka Spruce. The specific epithets of those with an asterisk give a clear indication of their natural habitat. I'm fairly sure that the honeybee wouldn't mind too much which cedar wood their home is built from.

Again With thanks to Shropshire BKA

### Re-queening an aggressive colony

*My recent article on artificial swarming prompted a CBKA member to ask how he might deal with an overly aggressive colony which he had twice attempted to de-queen in order to re-queen. On both occasions he failed to find the queen, and gave up because the bees were becoming increasingly hostile, which he found unnerving.*

*The following notes form the basis of my reply. As always it is better to work with the bees rather than against them. The solution lies in removing from the search the foragers, which are also the main aggressors.*

*Hence, prepare an empty hive complete with combs. Introduce a frame or frames containing eggs preferably from a more docile colony, but failing that from the aggressive colony itself, as the temper is likely to improve after any new queen has taken over from her predecessor.*

*Put the new hive with eggs—made up to 11 frames - on the original stand, and replace over a queen-excluder any supers. Move the original colony to one side in the same apiary. The flying bees will return to join the new hive. This depletes the original brood-box to create conditions in which the chances of finding the queen are considerably enhanced. Once found, she may be killed off, or transferred pro tem to a nucleus box with some bees (plus food) as a hedge against failure.*

*This presents two opportunities. Either the old brood-box may be re-united to the colony on the original stand, or the separated colony may be left to produce a new queen for itself. The latter course should only be followed if the beekeeper wishes to make increase and has no other colony better suited to the task.*

*If re-combining the two units is the preferred option, this may be accomplished in either of two ways. The preferred approach would be to go through the original brood-box to remove queen-cells before re-uniting. Alternatively, this could be done shortly after re-uniting (always over newspaper) when nurse-bees only are in attendance.*

*To eliminate queen-cells from the original brood-box by either method would be preferable to reuniting with queen-cells present, as ultimately it will become necessary to re-arrange the broodframes in the bottom box. If, when doing this, a virgin were introduced unnoticed, the consequences could be disastrous, especially if she had become infertile by being trapped “upstairs“ for too long.*

*With thanks to Malcolm Brierley. Cheshire Beekeepers' Association*

### The Power of Honey

*On Easter Monday evening I decided we would have scampi, chips and peas. 40 minutes in the top, very hot, Aga oven for the chips, followed by 15 minutes for the scampi, 5 minutes for the peas in a pan of boiling water. Everything organised, table laid and wine ready so there was time for a sherry - just a little one (the only fib in this story) !*

*Peas strained and dished out followed by the chips so it was now the turn of the scampi.*

*Pan removed with right hand with cloth around very hot handle and placed on top of Aga. Slice picked up with right hand and - yes you have guessed it - I picked up the pan with my left hand and no cloth !!!!!!!*

*My comments were unprintable and the pain was excruciating but the scampi remained on top of the Aga or in the pan.*

*Left hand palm and inside of fingers were totally red and blistered. 5 minutes under cold water tap - more pain - and then a good smearing of some runny creamed honey. This treatment was repeated morning and night with a protective tissue and glove or sock for 3 days. I could use my hand that evening and had no problems the next day, just slightly sore*

*Val couldn't believe it but it worked. As usual we forgot to photograph it so you will have to take my word for it. Pete Sutcliffe saw my hand on the Saturday afterwards at the committee meeting (confirmed—Ed.) and will confirm that it looked fine. An “Old Wives' Tale”, “the Power of Honey” or an “Easter Miracle” - take your choice.*

*Michael Minter. Cheshire Beekeepers' Association*

## *A WORRYING TREND Dave Cushman*

*It will not have escaped your notice that there has been an upsurge of interest in bees and beekeeping among the general public, so much so that many beginners courses are swamped with large numbers of those that wish to find out more. This increase in volume has meant that the standard of teaching is at risk of dropping, but this is not what I wish to bring to your attention.*

*As a result of large numbers of fresh faces there is a high proportion of the 'newbies' who are starting from a very low beekeeping knowledge base, that are easily led by fringe attitudes and 'quick fix' methods that may be easily found on the Internet. This fertile ground has been seized upon by those with axes to grind and those that have their own pet theories. As a result, there is a growing swell of opinion towards 'let alone bee keeping methods', weird and unusual hive types (some of which are quite bizarre). In parallel with this there is a strong undercurrent of 'all chemicals, treatments and bee management are bad'. If that was not enough, no selection is applied to breeding and the bees are left to raise whatever replacement queens are required. The bees are left to survive or fail according to circumstances and if any treatment or intervention is required, it often bears more resemblance to astrology or alchemy than anything that is based on science.*

*My concerns are for the newbie beekeepers and many of their beekeeping neighbours. The newbies are being led along a path that is not well founded in beekeeping knowledge and they may never be able to learn very much about bees as the methods require the hive not to be opened except a couple of times a year, so a beekeeper that lacks initial knowledge is operating hives of bees that are rarely inspected or checked for disease. Couple this with a general lack of knowledge about bee diseases and distrust of chemicals and we have a recipe for disease outbreaks. Such a situation is not good either for the newbies or their neighbours and is grossly unfair to the insects themselves.*

*At a slight tangent to all of this we also have some ill informed individuals infiltrating email lists and propagating badly formed logic about curing bee-keeping's ailments. This sort of thing is not usually a problem, but in the current climate we have many inexperienced beekeepers that, while they may not be gullible, they are nevertheless unable to sort out the wheat from the chaff.*

*Beekeepers of all types and degrees of experience have a duty to keep their bees healthy and reduce any risks to them, the environment and others as much as possible. I hope my fears are actually not borne out by future reality but it is a situation we should all be watching and be wary of.*

## *HOW TO KNOW HOW TO LOOK FOR THE QUEEN BEE*

*WW. M'Neal, American Bee Journal 13th December 1900*

*Here is a little kink, dear reader, which I think may be worth your while to consider. It is in regard to finding a queen-bee easily and quickly when the hive is densely crowded with bees.*

*When these conditions prevail, the queen's whereabouts may, to a very great extent, be determined by noting the position the ventilating bees occupy at the entrance to the hive. I have not yet found it otherwise that when these bees were stationed at one side of the hive-entrance, the queen was not to be found upon the combs at the other. No doubt you have many times noticed that the bees upon the lighting-board, that are engaged in ventilating the hive, frequently change their position from that of one side of the entrance to that of the other side. Of course, when the entrance is small, not being the full width of the front of the hive, this becomes no longer a means of judging of "internal conditions by external signs". If the hive contains nine frames, or ten frames, or possibly more, and these frames are self-spacing, it is a wonderful saving of time to be enabled to confine your search to half that number, with a reasonable degree of certainty of finding the queen upon one of the number you have selected.*



## A Guideline to Bee Diseases

*Key is to recognize healthy brood:*

*Healthy unsealed brood: pearly white ,curled up, 'Michelin Men';*

*Healthy sealed brood: domed cappings light to dark brown, dry and slightly convex.*

*Good brood pattern- few empty cells.*

*Notifiable Diseases- ie- must inform Regional Bee Inspector if you suspect the following:-*

### European Foul Brood.

*Caused by a Bacterial infection , infests the gut of unsealed brood- dead larvae can be seen in cells lying in an awkward position , can turn yellowish brown - brood pattern appears patchy- larvae dries to a scale which can be removed.*

*The bee inspector will decide the treatment either shook swarm or destruction.*

*There will be a standstill order on the Apiary for six weeks , no bees out- after which the Bee inspector will revisit and inspect.*

### American Foul Brood.

*Caused by a bacterial infection-but this bacteria forms spores during its life cycle these spores are very resistant to heat and cold and therefore are very persistent.*

*It kills the larvae after the cell is sealed*

*The cell cappings become sunken and perforated and look greasy. The brood pattern again has holes and has a pepper-pot appearance. The larvae can be pulled out to a rope with a matchstick (burn afterwards)*

*The treatment is destruction supervised by the Bee Inspector.*

*There is a standstill order again only lifted after an inspection by the bee inspector*

*Both the above can be spread by drifting, robbing and the beekeeper.*

### The following are not notifiable diseases:-

#### Chalk Brood

*caused by a fungus which kills the larvae and then develops into a hard chalky mummy sometimes found on the floor of the hive.*

*Nosema or sometimes called spring dwindling noticed in the spring- a colony fails to thrive. Can be associated with dysentery- yellow spots on the front of the hive or combs. Colonies fail to build up in the spring , disease can be confirmed by microscopic examination. Treat be renewing combs or/and feeding fumidol 'B' in the autumn feed. Nosema is caused by a protozoa which infects and feeds in the gut.*

#### Acarine.

*Is caused by a mite which invades the trachea-again microscopic examination will confirm. No visible external signs but shortens the life of the bee.*

*So colonies do not build up. No treatment available some suggest requeening.*

#### Poisoning.

*Piles of dead bees outside the hive of all ages.*

*Can only be confirmed by laboratory tests.*

*Send a sample of 30 bees to CSL and put a duplicate set of bees in the freezer in case they are needed for verification.*

*The Regional Bee Inspector is available also for advice.*

### The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA)

*Is moving away from cash sponsorship deals with pesticide manufacturers after concerns that the chemicals may be harmful to bees. Bee numbers in Britain are down 54 per cent in 20 years, double the rate of the rest of Europe, according to research by the University of Reading. The BBKA is a 135 year old charity that endorses four pesticides (synthetic pyrethroids) used to combat the varroa mite which is linked to the collapse of colonies. In return, for the past 12 years endorsements the association has received £17,500 a year from Bayer Crop Sciences and Syngenta. This relationship angered many members some of whom left the association. Phil Chandler, a writer and beekeeper from Devon, set up a rival campaign, 'Biobees', to promote chemical free beekeeping. Related Links Virus could explain the drop in bee numbers. Bloodsuckers DNA holds vital clues to saving the world's bees. The vanishing of the Bees Research from China indicates that synthetic pyrethroids are toxic to bees and cut the number of eggs hatched. Companies have introduced new pesticides, neonicotinoids, which are also blamed for wiping out bees. They are banned in France, Italy, Germany and Slovenia. The Soil Association, which champions organic farming, wants a similar ban here. Beekeepers too are concerned about these new products and have declined to endorse them. The BBKA, which has 17,000 members, is already identifying new sources of income to fund its annual budget of 250,000, such as a deal with Saga, which is sponsoring an 'Adopt a Beehive' scheme. Tim Lovett, public affairs director for the BBKA, said: "We have always taken a pragmatic approach to the use of pesticides and to ensure proper stewardship of the products. But we have not endorsed the newer neonicotinoids compounds and have called for more research on their safety. We are therefore now budgeting to ensure that we have no dependence at all on payments for product endorsement and we anticipate funding from the two chemical companies will end." Mr Chandler was pleased by the change of policy but said: "They seem to be dropping the sponsorship quietly when what I would like to see is them coming out more vocally against agricultural pesticides. But I am happy if they are stopping the endorsements." The BBKA is adamant, however, that the older pesticides will remain a tool for beekeepers and they will continue to discuss safety with manufacturers.*

*Great new. Now we should have honest and no bias information from our leaders ed*

### N. India

*Apiculturists in Uttarakhand which lies in the foothills of the Himalayas are making use of cow urine to prevent bees from contacting microbial diseases during the rearing process. Researchers at the Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in Pantnagar, India have taken to using cow urine extensively while breeding honeybees. "This is proving to be a sure-shot treatment for the honeybee rearing. Also, when one can get four percent increase in profits by the use of cow urine, what else does anyone want? Honeybee helps in the production and from the last two years, their population had decreased. Despite using medicines and pesticides, there was no increase in their population. The honeybee keepers are now totally depending upon cow urine," said Ruchira Tiwari, a researcher at the Govind Vallabh Agricultural University. In the course of rearing, bees are kept in fixed-frame boxes for better commercial extraction of honey, which makes them susceptible to microbial diseases during the process. The medicines used for killing the microbes have had a bad effect on the production of larvae but cow urine does not have such side-effects. "Medicines used to cost us a lot. The expenditure of medicines and other pesticides was very high. Cow urine is free and further, there is an increase in profit by three to four percent," said Puran Chandra Joshi, a beekeeper. An average bee colony yields about 10-15 kilograms of honey, which is produced by 20,000 to 60,000 bees. Bees being fast breeders lay as many as 800 to 3,000 eggs daily, which help breeders multiply their flock and yield without any expenditure. They also get beeswax as an additional by-product.*

## *The Pulled Queen*

*Sometimes, especially if you have been unable to inspect your hive regularly in the swarming season, you may be faced with a collection of sealed queen-cells.*

*If the weather is fine and there is no sign of the queen or unsealed brood, the colony has probably swarmed.*

*There might, though, be a hatched queen cell as well (not an unsealed one), indicating that a virgin has emerged. She will be difficult to find in a big colony, but unless found you will not know exactly what is going on.*

*It is very tempting to destroy all the remaining queen cells to prevent casts, but if the hatched virgin has already left with a cast, the colony will then be queenless. They will not be able to rear another queen as there are no young larvae present. There are two solutions. The first is simply to destroy all but one of the queen-cells, hoping fervently that it is not a dud. If there is a virgin loose in the hive they may still "throw" a cast.*

*The other solution is to select two or three ripe queen cells, which can be identified by the darkening and thinning of their caps. Using a sharp, pointed tool, like a large pin, very carefully lever off the cap (it is quite tough). Hold the cell close to the top bars, virgins are very active!*

*This releases the virgins into the hive. Then go ahead and destroy all remaining queen cells. The colony should not swarm unless you have missed a queen cell, and only one of the loose virgins should survive to head the colony, having eliminated her rivals.*

*This procedure is known as pulling the queen, and is very seldom found in textbooks. It can only be carried out on ripe queen cells, but if one has hatched the others will not be far behind in maturity.*

*Thanks to Harrogate & Ripon BKA Newsletter (Courtesy eBEES)*

## *Secret Ingredient in Honey Kills Bacteria*

*A new research published in the July 2010 edition of the FASEB Journal*

*explains for the first time how honey kills bacteria. The research shows that*

*bees make a protein that they add to the honey, called defensin-1, which*

*could one day be used to treat burns and skin infections and to develop new*

*drugs that could combat antibiotic-resistant infections.*

*"We have completely elucidated the molecular basis of the antibacterial activity of a single medical-grade honey, which contributes to the applicability of honey in medicine," said*

*Sebastian A.J. Zaat, Ph.D., a researcher involved in the work from the Department of Medical Microbiology at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam.*

*"Honey or isolated honey-derived components might be of great value for prevention and treatment of infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria."*

*To make the discovery, Zaat and colleagues investigated the antibacterial*

*activity of medical-grade honey in test tubes against a panel of antibiotic-resistant,*

*disease-causing bacteria. They developed a method to selectively*

*neutralize the known antibacterial factors in honey and determine their*

*individual antibacterial contributions. Ultimately, researchers isolated the defensin-1 protein, which is part of the honey bee immune system and is*

*added by bees to honey. After analysis, the scientists concluded that the vast*

*majority of honey's antibacterial properties come from that protein. This*

*information also sheds light on the inner workings of honey bee immune*

*systems, which may one day help breeders create healthier honey bees.*

*"We've known for millennia that honey can be good for what ails us, but we*

*haven't known how it works," said Gerald Weissmann, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of*

*the FASEB Journal, "Now that we've extracted a potent antibacterial ingredient*

*from honey, we can make it still more effective.*

*ScienceDaily (June 30, 2010)*

*From Ebees – courtesy of West Cornwall BKA*



### Egg Layers Union Sets Strike Vote

Members of the International Sisterhood of Egg layers, Local 1851, are set to vote this week on a strike action against Sweet Bee Honey Corporation. at issue is Sweet Bees new mandatory retirement age of two years for queen bees. The policy was announced on March 1, and drew an ominous hum of indignation from egg layers across the companys 1200-hive operation. Its completely arbitrary its not even a matter of individual ability, buzzed Myrtle, a 26-month-old queen who declined to give her last name. They just assume were too old and can no longer do the job. Myrtle was summarily dismissed as she reached her second anniversary at Sweet Bee; just weeks after the new policy took effect. She was able to find work in a nearby observation hive, and while she considers herself lucky, she acknowledges that this is a huge demotion for her. This used to be where old, worn-out queens went to die, she mused. I love my hive-mates and am treated well by my keeper, but its not the same as running a full-scale production hive. I need to be challenged. Its just not fair, complained Rosie Romano-Ortis-Petrova-Schultz-Bertolli- Bremer-Maggiano-Boehner-Milosevic-Anderssen-Bommarito-Yurovich-Hegel, a 22-month-old single mother of 54,371. I feel like Im just coming into prime production age. Ive got a lot of mouths to feed, and now I have to worry about one day being plucked out of my work station like some yellow jacket, and tossed out into the grass or worse. Sweet Bee officials declined to comment for the record, citing ongoing negotiations. But one high-level manager, speaking on condition of anonymity, called it a matter of simple economics It is true that you cant put a definitive age on productivity, he said. But the simple fact is, once they get beyond that two-year point, its really hit-or-miss. And since the union has consistently resisted the idea of its older members submitting to viability testing, he added, This was our only option. Another company official concurred. Close to 50 percent of queens experience significant production declines in their third year, and the worst part is, its so unpredictable. You have a queen who looks to be doing a great job, and suddenly she starts producing nothing but drones. Its very difficult, and very expensive, to replace her when that happens in mid-season. It is widely acknowledged that queen productivity declines with age, often during the third year and almost always by the fourth. The reasons are complex, but experts agree that the largest issue is a decreasing supply of sperm in the egglayers spermatheca. This organ is supplied on a mating flight within the first two weeks of a queens life, and is never replenished. (Sperm is required for fertilization of worker eggs, while unfertilised eggs develop into drones.) In previous labour negotiations, management has floated the idea of requiring queens to make additional mating flights, possibly annually, in order to circumvent this supply issue. But while drones have generally supported that proposal, the egg layers union has been vehemently opposed. Some members object on ethical grounds. Its just not natural, said one queen. No queen in nature has ever been subjected to this ritual more than once, and we shouldnt have to start now. Then there is the safety issue. There are occasional reports of virgin queens falling victim to birds or other predators during mating flights. Foragers deal with this danger as a part of their job, said Myrtle, but theyre also more nimble than we are, and have extensive flight training to boot. After mating, the only time a queen would typically leave the hive is in a swarm, when shes surrounded by a large contingent of workers. The last time the apiculture industry saw open labour strife was in 1962, when the International Union of Drones (DUI) declared a general strike, protesting the industry-wide policy of releasing drones in the autumn months in preparation for the winter dearth period. But the ill-fated strike occurred in late September, at a time when apiaries had little to gain from negotiation with the union. The action was settled within days in a humiliating defeat for the union. In an effort to save face and in exchange for a promise not to strike the following spring when a work stoppage would have had more serious repercussions, DUI leaders asked for and obtained an unrelated concession -- the free-agent status that their membership enjoys to this day. (Some conspiracy theorists maintain that this was the result the union had in mind at the outset, though most experts agree that drones are just not that intelligent.) Under the free agent policy, drones are allowed to drift from hive to hive as they see fit. It is not uncommon for a drone to leave his home hive in the morning, visit several drone congregation areas during the course of the day and then follow other drones back to a different hive in the evening. In recent years this state of affairs has been blamed in part for the spread of mites and disease conditions between hives, but there has been no serious discussion about amending the policy. As far as the impending strike vote is concerned, most believe the motion will pass easily. Its just too much, said an executive at another apiary. Sweet Bee cant expect this big a change to go uncontested. But (a strike) wont last long, he added. The company certainly cant do without the queens services this time of year. Im guessing management will cave quickly if they let them walk out at all. Meanwhile, Romano-Ortis-Petrova-Schultz-Bertolli-Bremer-Maggiano-Boehner-Milosevic-Anderssen-Bommarito-Yurovich-Hegel, the 22-month-old soon to be retiree, is busy planning for life after Sweet Bee. Shes developing a plan for a pheromone-marketing business, and is looking for consulting work.

*A useful new app that teaches everything you need to know about honeybees has just been released for the iPhone and the iPod Touch. "HoneyBees! 1.0" is a fascinating educational app that goes into the world of beekeeping and honeybees. Launched by Smiley Cat Software, the app is great for people wanting to learn about honeybees from gardeners, beekeepers, homeowners, and students. There are lovely photographs which are used to aid the teaching about how the bees live, work and take care of each other. A beekeepers diary section shows the work of the beekeeper and how the hives are cared for. The app follows the work from January through to spring as the bees start their work collecting pollen and nectar. Updates are added throughout the year as the bees' work progresses. The app has information about bee life cycle, diseases, how important bees are for the environment and economy, and where to order beekeeping equipment. Users will find the app educational and entertaining. HoneyBees! 1.0 is on the App Store for only \$1.99. iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch required with OS 2.1 or later.*

### **HONEY BEER**

*So, you have extracted your honey and now have a whole load of wet cappings to deal with. What will you do with them? Well, you could heat them to recover the honey - or you could wash them and use the washings to make mead - or you could try this honey beer:*

#### **Ingredients**

*1 lemon*

*1½ lb dark honey*

*½ oz hops*

*1 teaspoon granulated yeast (a beer one would be best - or bread yeast)*

*1 gallon water*

#### **Method**

*Peel the lemon rind, avoiding the white pith. Squeeze the juice and strain to remove pips. Dissolve the honey in 2 pints of the water in a bucket. Put the rest of the water into a large pan with the hops and lemon rind. Bring to the boil and boil gently for 30 minutes. Strain the hop water into the honey solution and leave to cool. Discard the hops and lemon rind. Add the activated yeast and lemon juice into the cooled mixture, cover over and leave for 3-4 days in a warm place to ferment. When fermentation has ceased, siphon into sterilised 1 pint beer bottles, leaving an airspace at the top. Add half a level teaspoon sugar to each bottle. Seal with plastic pop-off caps and leave in a warm room to ferment in the bottles for a few days. Then store for at least 2 weeks in a cool, dark place before drinking.*

*[Ring me when it's ready and I will be happy to come and give an opinion on its quality! P.E.]  
Courtesy Cambridge BKA via B.E.E.S*

*Once again the wasps are on the warpath and as many of us know from last year their effect on a hive can be disastrous. Entrances must be closed down, even to a couple of bee spaces if necessary, so that they can be defended. Wasp traps can be made with jam and water in a jar with a small hole in the metal lid. Cut a cross in the lid and bend the tags down so that any wasp entering won't get out and regularly empty out the dead wasps.*

*Note to Peter: I have never yet seen a wasp escape to tell his friends! [This is an important point. Many home-made traps allow some wasps to escape and they will then recruit their friends to come and share in the spoils; the net result is that these traps make matters worse - even though they may catch large numbers of wasps.*

*Mike Osborne*

**STRATFORD-UPON-AVON & DISTRICT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION and e-bees**

### **Precise measurement of honey**

*It is always a problem to know if you have filled your jars correctly, or if you have made that cake of wax exactly 1 ounce. Honey Show judges can be so harsh (but fair). Digital weighing scales are now available with accuracy guaranteed to 0.1 grams and they are very competitively priced. Do an internet search for Digital Scales or try Ebay. Scales weighing from 0.1 – 1000 grams are available for as little as £7.00. Digital kitchen scales with accuracy to 1 gram, are much the same price. Refractometers are also far less expensive than they were and determining the water content of your honey becomes very simple. Be very sure that you are buying a honey refractometer and not one intended for brewing, wine making or any other activity. Also insist that calibration oil and registry block are included. Almost all of these products are Chinese in origin and those stocked in the UK will arrive more quickly, cost less in postage and your supplier, should there be a problem, will not be on the other side of the world.*

*Stewart Gould*

**SOMERTON BEEKEEPERS NEWS**

## RE-QUEENING WITH QUEEN CELLS

*I have been trying to find an easier way to re-queen colonies and to spread native genes rapidly around the Stratford area. As many of you will know, our initial efforts involved setting up a mating apiary at Snitterfield where we concentrated good native stock. Queens were raised and then used to re-queen colonies in other apiaries. This worked well and we improved our stock considerably, virtually eliminating bad temper in a season. However, this came at a considerable cost in terms of the time and bees taken to raise cells, make up mating nucs, and then introduce the queens. Since then we have seen some deterioration in temper due to introgression from non-native bees in the area, so it was time to repeat the exercise.*

*Knowing that bees will happily raise queen cells from started grafts above the excluder in a queen-right colony, I wondered if they might do so if the grafted cell was placed in the brood nest. We grafted a considerable number of cells, started them in a swarm box, and then transferred them to colonies that we wished to re-queen. All were placed in the brood box. We protected some with roller cages (open at the bottom of course) and some we just wedged between the top bars. Most were completed successfully and hatched but only a couple successfully replaced the old queen - they just disappeared. Back to the drawing board.*

*Our next experiment was to introduce ripe queen cells (i.e. ones on the point of hatching) to queenright colonies. These were protected in roller cages and again hatched successfully. A small number of the virgins departed with small mating swarms, but the majority just disappeared, possibly killed by the old queens. Back to the drawing board again.*

*This year we have tried a different approach. When Australian beekeeper, Norman Salt, visited us last year, he told me that he re-queens his colonies using ripe queen cells, but he kills the old queen at the same time that he introduces the queen cell. We have tried his method this year and have raised and introduced around 85 queen cells; although I do not have the final figures yet, it is clear that the success rate is very high, probably better than that achieved by raising queens, mating them in nucs and then introducing them - and without all the work associated with nucs. In just one season we have been able to re-queen virtually every colony showing any undesirable trait (not just temper) - something that we could not have done otherwise.*

*Of course there are some drawbacks:*

- Queens will be mated in the apiaries where the colonies are situated rather than in the rather more controlled environment of a mating apiary - but we should remember that the new queens will produce drones carrying the genes that we want regardless of the drones with whom they mate; this will benefit us in future years. We also avoid the problems associated with ensuring a sufficient supply of drones in a mating apiary - and the potential for inbreeding.*
- There will be a short - we hope - break in brood rearing before the new queen mates and starts laying. This might reduce the crop to some extent, but may also have a beneficial effect as the break in brood rearing will impact on the varroa population. •*

*Cells may not hatch, virgins may be defective in some way e.g. have deformed wings, and virgins can disappear on mating flights (perhaps with a swarm) leaving the colony queenless. We have had very few of these and have rectified them by adding a further cell.*



## Chalkbrood

*While doing the spring cleaning with my colonies I notice that a number of them are suffering with chalkbrood, some more than others. It is not unusual to find this in our hives and what we see is the infected brood, called 'mummies' which when removed from the comb, appear to be solid clumps, reminiscent of chalk pieces. Some colonies are better at cleaning them out than others. Chalkbrood is a fungal disease. Growth of the causative organism, *Ascosphaera apis*, appears to be enhanced by a number of factors, including high moisture content (colonies not well ventilated in high humidity situations), cool temperatures and colony stress.*

*There is no recommended chemical treatment for chalkbrood\*; often symptoms seem to clear up by themselves. Good hygienic behaviour by a colony, that is, quick removal of the mummies, appears to aid in clearing up the symptoms. Although it remains an enigma, some generalizations are in order concerning chalkbrood:*

- 1. It occurs mostly in colonies expanding during the summer.*
- 2 It rarely kills a colony, but will weaken it, leading to a reduction in honey surplus.*
- 3 It is promoted by certain conditions; dampness, susceptibility of bee stock, inadequate nutrition, other diseases or conditions (queenlessness, laying workers, chilled brood).*
- 4 It is spread mainly by beekeepers.*
- 5. It appears that re-queening with resistant bee stock is the most likely way to clear up the symptoms.*

*Because there is no chemical control for chalkbrood, the beekeeper must employ as much cultural control as possible. This means stress on the colony should be reduced as much as possible and good quality queens, the offspring of which appear to resist symptoms, should be used to re-queen colonies which are diseased.*

*Another contributory factor may be the use of old brood combs. There is evidence that older brood combs may be a reservoir for the fungus. Routinely replacing brood comb with foundation, therefore, may be another technique at the beekeeper's disposal to aid in controlling this disease.*

*\*Chalkbrood Recommendations from Prof. Malcolm T. Sanford, University of Florida.*

*With thanks to Alan Stonell, Education and Training wiltshire BKA and e-bees*

## Land of milk and honey!

*Recently discovered beehives from ancient Israel 3,000 years ago appear to be the oldest evidence for beekeeping ever found, scientists reported. Archaeologists identified the remains of honeybees — including workers, drones, pupae, and larvae — inside about 30 clay cylinders thought to have been used as beehives at the site of Tel Rehov in the Jordan valley in northern Israel. This is the first such discovery from ancient times. "Although texts and wall paintings suggest that bees were kept in the Ancient Near East for the production of precious wax and honey, archaeological evidence for beekeeping has never been found," the researchers, led by Guy Bloch of Israel's Hebrew University of Jerusalem, wrote in a paper in the June 8 issue of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The hives have a small hole on one side for the bees to come and go, and on the other side is a lid for the beekeeper to use to access the honeycomb. The archeologists used carbon dating on grains that had spilled from a broken storage jar next to the hives to estimate that they were about 3,000 years old. "The exceptional preservation of these remains provides unequivocal identification of the clay cylinders as the most ancient beehives yet found," the researchers wrote. The scientists used a high-resolution electron microscope to study the bee remains, and found that their legs and wings suggest they belonged to a different subspecies than the bees currently found in Israel. In fact, the ancient bees most closely resemble those found in modern-day Turkey. The researchers found three rows of these hives in a courtyard that used to be part of a large architectural complex during the 10th to 9th centuries B.C. "The location of such a large apiary in the middle of a dense urban area is puzzling because bees can be very aggressive, especially during routine beekeeping practices or honey harvesting," the researchers wrote. They speculate that maybe the honey was so valuable it was worth placing in such a congested area to keep it safe. Overall, the findings "suggest that beekeeping already was an elaborate agricultural practice in Israel 3,000 years ago," Bloch and colleagues wrote.*

*Clara Moskowitz, LiveScience*

### Imports of honey bees come with sting.

Bees are being flown more than 11,000 miles in an attempt to save the Scottish honey industry from collapse. Desperate beekeepers have been forced to import new stocks of insects from as far away as New Zealand after wet summers and infestations of disease left them struggling to stay in business. Supplies of honey from the UK have been running low because commercial beekeepers have lost up to 80 per cent of their bees in recent years. They say they have had no choice but to import replacement bees from abroad. But there is a sting – bee experts have attacked the businesses, accusing them of risking new outbreaks of disease and threatening the future of native species by bringing in foreign breeds. Heather Hills Honey in Perthshire, which has 1,300 hives and 52 million bees, is among a growing number of farms that have been forced to import the insects to survive. Over the past year, due to freezing temperatures, rain and disease, the farm lost about 800 hives – compared to about 150 in a normal year. The farm was already struggling because of a series of abnormally wet summers, which left the bees unable to leave their hives to collect pollen or breed, when it was struck by an outbreak of European Foulbrood. The disease, caused by a bacterium that infests bee larvae and leaves a foul rotten fish smell, took hold across Perthshire and Angus, decimating hundreds of hives. “If we hadn’t got these replacement bees we would have gone out of business,” said Mark Noonan, managing director of Heather Hills, which has been operating since 1945. “We have had to really consider whether to keep going or not.” New Zealand specialises in shipping honey bees around the world. Sometimes whole colonies are ordered, at other times just new queens to put in an existing hive. Other countries that export bees include Slovenia and Germany. The bee type has no impact on the taste or appearance of the honey. Noonan chose New Zealand bees because the country has a similar climate to Scotland, and a summer of about the same length, so he thinks the bees should adapt well. One colony costs up to £200, meaning he had to spend thousands of pounds to restock his empty hives. However, Alan Teale, president of the Scottish Beekeepers’ Association, said he had “no sympathy whatsoever” with firms that had decided to import insects from overseas. He said it was against the SBA code of conduct, and warned that foreign bees posed a threat to native breeds. “We understand why commercial beekeepers have been bringing these bees in but we don’t like it,” Teale said. “They are a threat to the majority of beekeepers in the UK because they could cause genetic erosion of native populations and these bees are poorly adapted to our climate.” Instead, he said, every effort should be made to preserve the native dark northern European honeybee. The bees from New Zealand are usually mongrel varieties developed over years of cross breeding. Gavin Ramsay, disease convener at the SBA, said he was worried that importing the insects could bring disease. Already the UK has become infested with Varroa, a mite, which came to Britain from Europe, after spreading from Asia, and kills off entire hives. Ramsay said: “It’s very sad that some that haven’t traditionally imported at all are doing so now.” Noonan hit back: “You can afford to be judgemental if your livelihood doesn’t depend on it. If there were stock in this country then I would prefer to get them from here, but if we hadn’t done this we would have gone out of business.” He pointed out that there were regulations to ensure only bees with a clean bill of health were brought to the UK, and said there would be no cross breeding because he would keep the New Zealand insects separate from his native stock.

Jenny Fyall, The Scotsman

### More cases of deadly bee disease in Jersey

Inspectors brought to Jersey after an outbreak of a deadly bee disease was declared in the island have found 26 hives affected by American foulbrood. The environment minister declared Jersey an infected zone, banning all movement of bees and equipment, when the disease was found in two hives. National Bee Unit staff were called by the Planning and Environment Department to examine Jersey’s 400 hives. The states said about half of hives so far tested had been infected. Tests are due to continue over the weekend. Linda Lowswick, States vet, said: “We have inspected between 40 and 50 hives out of a total of more than 400. “The infection rate is around 50% so far and five hives have been destroyed. “This is a very distressing time for the island’s beekeepers and we are very grateful for their cooperation.”

BBC June 11th 2010

*The Above 2 stories just show what what can happen and what is happening if nothing is being done to protect our country from real problems ED*

## PIED PIPERS

*A tiny group of bees act like “pied pipers” to trigger the onset of bee swarms report scientists.*

*By buzzing a “piping” signal, the bees are able to initiate an explosive departure from the hive. Bees are known to use signals to tell the colony when to swarm but which bees had the power to make this decision was unclear. Now scientists have identified a small oligarchy of individual bees that hold the key to swarm behaviour. The researchers reveal their findings in the journal ‘Behavioural Ecology and Sociobiology.’*

### Exodus

*During the reproductive season, large honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) colonies synchronise an explosive departure of most of their workers and the queen.*

*This causes a swarm as the honeybees travel to form a new colony in a new location. The sudden departure of bees has been known about for centuries and bee keepers have even found ways to avoid it happening and avoid losing valuable bees.*

*However, scientists have only recently begun to understand how the bees co-ordinate their departure and mass exodus.*

*“In this study we wanted to determine what bees are responsible for organising this mass departure, and how they organise this process in an efficient manner,” says Dr Juliana Rangel from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, US.*

*Dr Rangel undertook the study along with Sean Griffin and Professor Thomas Seeley also from Cornell University.*

### The bee identity

*“Our study is the first one to reveal the identity of the signallers that initiate a swarm’s departure from the hive,” Dr Rangel says.*

*The report finds that a small group of experienced forager bees called nest-site scouts produce a “piping signal” that primes the workers for swarming.*

*This makes the bees warm up their flight muscles for departure. They then produce a “buzzrun” signal, which releases the departure of the swarm.*

*This small oligarchy of bees make up only 5% of the colony’s total population.*

*The researchers think that the oligarchy in the colony they studied, consisted of only 200 individuals in colony size of 8,000.(sic) It is the job of these bees to go out of the hive and search for potential homes for the colony.*

*When they find somewhere suitable, they return and start the process of swarming by producing the piping signal. They also recruit others by undertaking a waggle dance.*

*This is a dance-like movement by which the bee communicates the distance and direction of a location to other bees.*

*“Before our studies little was known about how this sudden exodus was co-ordinated, and which bees were in charge of this process,” Dr Rangel says.*

### Group control

*Animals that travel in groups must synchronise the timing of their movements.*

*Three different decision making mechanisms are known to co-ordinate a group’s departure Dr Rangel explains.*

*“In a democracy, the majority of the individuals in the group decide when the move will take place, for example whooper swans and red deer.*

*In the other extreme is the despotic mechanism of decision making, in which only one individual, the group’s leader, makes the decision of when to move, for example Hamadryas baboons and African elephants. Right in the middle lies an oligarchy where a small number of well-informed individuals, makes the decision of when the group should move.*

*Decisions of group travel made by an oligarchy are very rare, and very few studies have reported an oligarchic control of group travel,” says Dr Rangel.*

*“This contributes to our knowledge of how a small group of individuals can make important decisions for an entire group.”*

*Jody Bourton, BBC Earth News*

*Thanks to West Cornwall’s ‘An Hes’ March 2010, via e-bees*



### *Some kill or cure remedies for bee stings.*

- 1. To stop the smarting, apply some clay mixed with urine.*
- 2. Treat with ammonia and whiskey to relieve you in a measure.*
  - 3. Cover it with earwax.*
  - 4. Rub with the inside of a banana skin.????*
  - 5. Rub with meat tenderiser.*
  - 6. Cover with a clean penny.*
  - 7. Cover with a slice of raw onion.*
  - 8. Rub with toothpaste.*
- 9. Immediate relief can be gained by rubbing with a piece of lean raw meat.*
- 10. For bee stings use hart's horn. For snake bites, get drunk.*
- 11. To treat bee stings naturally, use fresh cow manure.*
- 12. Rub some spirits of turpentine on the place and the pain will nearly cease in one minute.*
- 13. Rub the bee that has stung us, or any other bee around the wound, making the body the antidote to the tail.*
- 14. The person who has been stung should catch, as speedily as possible,*

### *What can I treat my hives with?*

*Cuprinol has long been the traditional treatment for cedar bee-hives. Recently there has been news that this was no longer safe, as the firm had changed the make-up of its products. However, last year, Cuprinol commissioned a study at the National Bee Unit of the Central Science Laboratory to evaluate the new formulation. Below are the results of that study. Cuprinol Garden Wood Preserver (DP) Red Cedar and Cuprinol Trade Decorative Wood Preserver (T) Red Cedar were applied by brush application and Cuprinol Trade Low Odour Wood Preserver Clear was applied by dip coating. In all cases treated hive parts showed no toxicity (up to 6 weeks from treatment) to bees or brood after exposure to these hive parts. Do not treat outside of hives whilst bees are in the hive! Decorative Preserver can also be used on external surfaces. Avoid G S & F /Exterior Preserver as this may taint honey.*

*Cheshire BKA – courtesy of Ebees*

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Bob Fulton as a few things for sale which are as follows.

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Contact Bob for full details at

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