

**North Bucks Beekeepers' Association**  
Affiliated to BBKA and Buckinghamshire BKA  
**Newsletter: February 2010**

Hoorah hoorah and jubilations! We actually had a fine sunny day on the 17<sup>th</sup> January. I was much relieved to see my bees flying and knew that they had survived the minus 13 degree temperatures of the past week. Bees at hive number 2 were dragging out dead bees so from that I deduce that the queen may be starting to lay. I was always taught never touch your hives during the winter months. In 26 years of beekeeping I have followed this advice and have not even hefted the hives, probably because I am not tall enough or strong enough. The only time I do go near though is to very gently slip a block of candy over the hole in each crown board. This I was able to do that very afternoon.

**January** Yet again Martin the Magician (aka **Martin Buckle**) got our beekeeping year off to a cracking start. As I introduced him, I said that Martin never fails to surprise and enlighten us. This proved to be very true and those who were present can testify that Martin not only gave us a fascinating talk on skeps, their construction and materials (how lovely to use bramble and purple moor grass in a skep) but in true magician style, he conjured something out of a heavily propolised skep, not dissimilar to a rabbit out of a top hat. I jumped on a chair and everyone moved quite quickly, with Bob offering up a Marks & Spencer chocolate chip cookie. By all accounts Martin continued his magic on the way home with three more surprises. Another bit of sorcery occurred with the very same skep at the Beds BKA talk the following night! See what fun you miss by not coming to meetings!

For more thrills and spills don't forget Martin's **Skep Making Course** on **15-16 May** at Rectory Cottages. The fee is £20.00 which covers the cost of the materials and your own fid. Contact Libby Culshaw to put your name on the list. Only a couple of places left.

**The Bee Shed 2009 from Andrew and Fiona Eelbeck**

Early April and the gate to a possible apiary site was open when Fiona was going by. She popped in to ask about the possibility of siting bee hives there. The reply was that he already had bees and pointed to where the bees were. They were coming out of the side of an old shed on the site.

When Fiona returned and told me of this we both went up and had a look. There were dark bees coming out of a circular hole about 8 feet off the ground. To the left in the next panel was another hole and yellowish bees were emerging. There were two colonies in the shed. We had permission to remove them and also to put our own bee hives in a corner on the site.

The first weekend we returned to try and remove the first colony. The bees were located in the gap between wood on the outside and plasterboard on the inside. The inside of the shed was piled full of all sorts of things that were not going to be moved so it had to be from the outside. The wooden panels were removed to expose large amounts of wax, bees and brood and a small amount of stores. By this time bees were flying around all over the place. The brood area was removed and transferred to a hive but the bees did not want to go in. As the wooden panels had been removed the hole in the next panel looked like their home so the bees drifted towards the other colony. They did not handle anything like a swarm and most of the bees ended up in the other colony. We had seen no sign of the queen which would have made things easier.

The next weekend we had another go on the, by now, increased colony. The panels were removed to reveal wax, brood, yellow and black bees and stores. The wax this time was arranged more like viewing a super in regular rows inside the panel. The brood area was cut out and transferred into the hive and after a great deal of coaxing the bees transferred into the hive. A few days later we transferred them to another apiary.