

## **North Bucks Beekeepers' Association**

Affiliated to BBKA and Buckinghamshire BKA

**Newsletter: November 2008**

### **IAN BEATY a tribute by Gunter Weber:**

As many of you know, on 5<sup>th</sup> October, our good friend and fellow beekeeper, Ian, finally succumbed to the cancer he had fought so bravely for so long. Ian knew his days on this planet were numbered and he lived every minute to the full and to the last!

On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October I attended his wake. No funeral – it was Ian's wish that his body be donated to Cambridge University for research. It was during this poignant afternoon, on hearing many accounts of his full and varied 67 years that I realised the enormity of the task that had been requested of me, i.e. 'to write a little about Ian for the NBBKA Newsletter.' How can you write a 'little' about such a BIG man? Ian had so very many facets to his life and so very many colleagues and friends in far flung places – it would take a book (or two!) to include his many achievements, interests, skills, personality and life.

I have many good memories of my own of Ian. First in that we started beekeeping at about the same time in the mid 1970s. It was Ian who was there to help me out with my bees when I broke my elbow and was unable to do it alone. It was Ian who 'bailed' me out when honey stocks were low or I needed commodities at short notice.

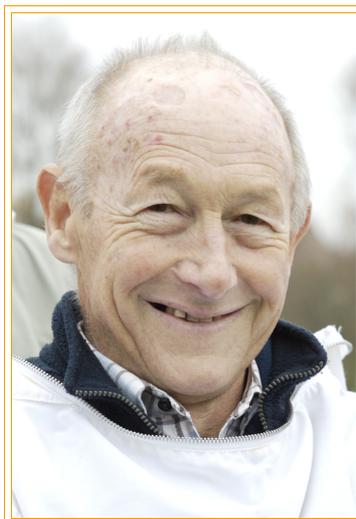
I fondly remember a trip some years ago when Ian and I travelled together to a Queen Rearing Course in Denmark. It was an inspiring trip, which strengthened our friendship. Ian was still keen to breed his own bees and expand his colonies up to this summer, until I had a quiet word in his ear that it may not be his most prudent decision!

My daughters also remember Ian fondly as the 'great guy' who took them up in a plane and flew them low over their 'home patch' when they were small. Even Maggie, my wife, has hairy scary memories of the weekend that Ian, curious to attend an Appalachian Dance Festival near Peterborough, escorted her (at great speed) on his treasured motorbike!

So you see, I can only tell you a little about this good guy called Ian Beaty. However, I called on my fellow beekeepers to help me out and together we compiled an A - Z of Ian as we knew him.

So to Ian, wherever you are, these are your fellow beekeepers' memories of you:

**Amiable, Adventurous,  
Cunning, Creative,  
Encouraging, Energetic,  
Helpful, Informative,  
Kind, Knowledgeable,  
Natural, Nice guy,  
Perceptive, Pilot,  
Resourceful, Successful,  
Talented, Unique,  
Vociferous, Wonderful,  
Xciting, Young at heart,**



**Bold, Big\_hearted, Best beekeeper,  
Determined, Delightful, Expert engineer,  
Funny, Friendly, Generous, Genuine,  
Ingenious, Inventive, Jubilant in success,  
Lovely, Manipulative (but in a nice way!),  
Original, Optimistic, Persuasive (highly!),  
Pragmatic, Quick to assist, Rigorous,  
Skep maker, Stoic, Tenacious, Top man,  
Unquenchable enthusiasm, Visionary,  
Welcoming, Wish I had met him earlier,  
Zealous, Zany**

**We will miss you, Ian!**

### Committee Meeting

The Committee met on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The main topic of the evening was concerned with finalising details for the County AGM.

Sadly, John Butler resigned from being the Membership Secretary but he is willing to help out where he can in future. Kevin Emmett has kindly agreed to take over the post.

Most of the Association equipment has been located and we are now undertaking to store it at the same place. There will follow a list of items for hire. A deposit of £10.00 will be charged, £5.00 will be returned to the hirer with the other £5.00 going to the Association.

The Basic Beekeeping Exam was discussed. If you would like to know more about this, contact Sue Bird or Chris Jay. You have to have kept bees for one year to take the exam.

**This year's Beginners** make sure that you join the Association for 2009 as a full member because the subscription includes £2.00 Bee Disease Insurance for three hives. What a bargain! Contact Kevin Emmett or Liz Parsons.

Barry Taylor is about to update and amend our Web Site. Please get in touch with him if you have new ideas or would like to include any bee related information.

**The County AGM** was held on 15<sup>th</sup> October at Rectory Cottages. Forty people attended both from our own Branch & from The Chalfonts, High Wycombe and Mid Bucks.

County Secretary, Beulah Cullen (Chalfonts) was unable to attend as she was in hospital. We wish her a speedy recovery. Sheila Borwick (Chalfonts & Mid Bucks) kindly stepped in and took the minutes. Chairman John Catton (Chalfonts) chaired the meeting & Mike Leon (Chalfonts) gave the Treasurer's Report.

Sadly, our President, John Crick (High Wycombe) was unable to attend for health reasons and also stepped down from the Presidency. John Catton read the President's Report. Bob Hunter (High Wycombe) was elected President. We look forward to seeing a lot more of him as he promises to attend our meetings. NBBKA have to decide who will represent us on the County Committee. If you would like to be one of the representatives (we need two), please contact any NBBKA Committee Member.

Peter Thomkins gave a very interesting illustrated talk about Rothamstead and the many characters involved in its development over the years. The plant stall netted enough funds to cover the cost of the Hall. It was good to see so many people there from all over the County, exchanging information and enjoying the evening. We also gained three new members! As hosts we put on a most impressive spread and there were plenty of helpers. Many thanks to everyone for making the evening such a success.

### Correction

In last month's Newsletter I wrote that Michael Alexander had become a General Committee Member. Hats off to him, although he was surprised at this announcement, he nonetheless said he would stand in if necessary so as not to let the side down! I *should* have informed you that Andrew Eelbeck had agreed to become a General Committee Member. Apologies all round.

### Forage

A favourite winter flowering shrub of the bees is Mahonia 'Charity' with a scent not unlike that of lily of the valley. The first pretty yellow flowers open in late October and the plant blooms till well after December. It can be covered with bees on warm days but when they are confined to barracks the blue tits rampage through and tear the flowers to shreds in their search for aphids. In spring the flowers give way to strings of blue berries which can apparently be made into jelly. They are far too astringent for me but the blackbirds tackle them when they are ripe.

Michaelmas daisies are also useful to bees at this time of

year.



**Bee Craft** In this month's Bee Craft there was an article by Libby Culshaw about the forthcoming BBC1 television programme which features our new members, the Gibbons Family, Libby's bees and possibly a glimpse of a pink bee suit! The producers keep altering the times of transmission. The latest information is Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 20.30. The series entitled "Wild About Your Garden" starts about 19<sup>th</sup> November – keep your eye on the tv listings. The producers have made a 45 minute "special" which will go out in the New Year.

### **Apiary Notes from Ken**

I inspected fourteen developing colonies in mid October. They began as small nuclei in early July, with newly introduced queens from the German Breeding Institute at Celle. The bees are pure-bred and the workers are all identical in appearance. They have built up slowly and steadily during what has been a poor summer of lowish temperatures. Normally I wouldn't inspect colonies at this time, but these bees are very easily handled, the day was warm, sunny and calm and I felt a nagging need to check them.

All the combs are arranged in the "warm way", that is parallel to the hive entrance, so that the colony can be worked from the rear. On average the colonies were covering nine combs with two combs of brood. The brood was towards the front of the brood box, by the entrance. Was this for ventilation, access for incoming pollen or the colony positioning itself to move back through the stores as winter progresses? Who can say?

The stores were mostly capped and nicely arranged around the brood. The bees looked fit but some seemed rather light on stores so I topped up with some undiluted honey, using plastic lidded jars, through which I had poked holes using a hot two inch nail. The use of honey ensures that it could be used or stored without the bees having to invert it with enzymes, which uses a deal of energy. I have certainly done more feeding this year than any time I can remember.

Bees have a limited amount of life energy. The bees entering winter will need to raise brood the following spring, so as little as possible should be done which burns up some of that life energy. Energy is used whenever the colony is disturbed, for example, by the beekeeper fiddling with the colony in the dead of winter, mice getting in, woodpecker attack, actions of animals or adverse weather conditions rocking the hive or flooding it.

The final message therefore is have the colonies on firm ground. Mouse guards should be in position within the next few days especially following the recent cold snap. Make sure that the roof is sound and not letting in rain. Damp in a hive in winter is a sure killer. Consider adequate ventilation. Bees produce carbon dioxide and water vapour as they metabolise. There needs to be an exit point for these waste products. I tend to leave the feed hole open. If you use an entrance block insert it with the entrance uppermost, so that dead bees can't block the exit. Bees can keep themselves warm during winter but they do need to be kept dry.

### **From Frank, Chairman of Mid Bucks Beekeepers**

At the end of the Disease Recognition Seminar which Ian Homer ran in July, there was a question and answer session chaired by Richard Ball, the National Bee Inspector and treatment of Nosema was raised. Richard was firmly of the opinion that Fumidil B should not be used prophylactically because of dangers of resistance developing and the possibility of residues getting into the honey.

Apparently Fumidil B is no longer available in other EU countries and is only available here because of an error by the UK authorities. The inspectors believe that this anomaly will be corrected soon and Fumidil B will be withdrawn.

When asked what treatment should be used for Nosema, we were told that Vita Green has been reported as being effective but the company cannot advise it as such because formal trials have not been conducted and the manufacturers are not prepared to finance them.

The advice given by Richard Ball was to perform a comb change. This will certainly clean up the spores that are on the combs but will do nothing to reduce the disease within the adult bees. One of the prerequisites of a successful comb change is to have a strong colony to start with – the opposite of the situation when Nosema is severe. I think we will be hearing a lot more about Nosema in the near future.

### Queenie's Kitchen

Nick Grey's **Christmas Honey Liquer**. Nick (Chalfont BKS) has often been to give us talks, demonstrations and tastings. He has been our Honey Show judge over several years. Follow his recipe now and you will have a nice honey liquer for Christmas.

- Buy a bag of frozen fruits such as "Fruits of the Forest"
- Put the fruits in a large lidded crock with 1 lb honey
- Pour in a bottle of vodka (cheap vodka is fine)
- Mix together. Shake it every day for a month
- Rack the liquer off and eat the fruits.
- Merry Christmas!

### Buzz Words

Did you know...

- if you have a blocked nose and sinuses you can clear them by putting honey on an ear bud and smearing it up inside the nostrils at the top of the nasal cavity? Don't laugh, it really works!
- propolis is supposed to cure warts and verrucas?

### This Month's Gathering

**Honey Cookery - a demonstration** by Barbara Dalby at Rectory Cottages Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.30.

Barbara originally trained as a medical secretary, after becoming a beekeeper, she discovered she wasn't too keen on fresh honey! So she decided to experiment using honey as an ingredient in cookery to find out exactly what was achievable. Barbara has been giving honey cookery demonstrations for many years to all sorts of audiences all over the country. She and her husband have kept up to 150 colonies, at present they have 60 colonies. Like many others, Barbara says their bees have not produced as much honey as in previous years. Barbara will demonstrate various ways of cooking with honey using a microwave oven. At the end we will be able to sample the results.

### Also this month

Bedfordshire BKA has cordially invited us to their talk by Willy Robson on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> at Marston Vale Forest Centre. As Willy Robson is such a well known beekeeping character, Beds BKA have hired a larger hall to accommodate everyone. However, seating is limited to 120 people so it is important that you let Ken Gorman 01908 560610 or Sue Lang (BedsBKA) 01234 764780 know by 9<sup>th</sup> Nov as they have to confirm numbers with the Centre. There will be a fee of £2.00 per person to cover room hire and refreshments.

**SMOKERS IN WHITEHALL** To round off the 24 week campaign to increase Bee Research Funding, BBKA propose the following on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup>

- 13.00 meet at Old Palace Yard, Westminster
- 13.30 proceed to 10 Downing Street
- 14.00 deliver petition
- 14.30 enter Houses of Parliament
- 14.45 lobby MPs (let your MP know in advance that you will be going)
- 15.30 disperse.

Please try to support this, wearing your bee suit and fuming your smoker! For more information see BBKA website. To register contact: [register@britishbeekeepers.com](mailto:register@britishbeekeepers.com) or phone 02476 696679

**Bee there or bee square!**



**IMPORTANT MESSAGE** Subscriptions for next year should be in by now.

If you haven't received a membership form please contact Liz Parsons 07887 578662 or [NBBKA@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:NBBKA@tiscali.co.uk) as a matter of urgency.

If you would like to comment on or contribute to our Newsletter please contact Libby Culshaw  
12 Larch Grove, Bletchley MK2 2LG 01908 375968 [laviniaculshaw@hotmail.com](mailto:laviniaculshaw@hotmail.com)