

CBKA Newsletter November 2007

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www.teesbees.co.uk



A feature of the British weather over the time that I have been a beekeeper is the Indian Summer we seem to experience most years towards the end of October or early November. Nights are often cold even frosty, but the days warm up to almost summer temperatures. People were seen eating outdoors in Stockton High Street just a few days ago when it was warm enough to walk about in just shirt sleeves. It's the weather for walking, taking advantage of the chance to get out into the countryside before the real cold sets in. Have the trees ever looked more beautiful than they have this year? It's been a photographer's dream. There's new birds to be

seen, red wings and field-fairs from the continent, and waxwings, beautiful sights, were seen this week in Redcar - a clear sign that it's cold on the continent and our winter is not too far away. There has been several frosty mornings with not a bee in sight, but by lunch time they are flying in vast numbers and bringing home large loads of pollen - another beautiful sight.

By now most of you will have your heather honey in jars or even sold. The crop this year seems to have been a success for some but a distinct failure for others. Failure is sad, for folks become despondent of ever being successful on the heather, so much so that some people just refuse to go there any more. As I said in my talk last April 'success on the heather has to be worked for', it doesn't just happen. Success is a relative term, and the *effort* required to obtain reasonable success in the summer time is only half the effort required to obtain success on the heather. Clearly, the weather is a factor and this year the crucial first two weeks in August were very bad preventing our bees foraging on most days. Folks who took bees to the heather in late July fared better, but when the weather improved in mid August well stocked hives did remarkably well returning with at least one super completely filled, and on the heather that's good.

So now is the time to start planning for next year. There's little we can do for our bees at this time of the year - they are best left alone. But we can plan. Start by thinking about what you did this year and how you can improve next year; no it's not too early. CBKA have an excellent selection of bee books and it costs nothing to borrow any of them; see Tom Rettig for the book list. Reading must be about the easiest and cheapest way to im-

prove your knowledge. If you are confused by what you read, be prepared to ask questions - that why we are CBKA.

Sal has sent me the following article which endeavours to explain the cause of Colony Collapse Disorder, the disease which seems to be affecting bees particularly in America and to some extent here:-

"A virus, potentially imported from Australia, has been identified as the likely cause of a mysterious blight that has decimated honey bee populations across the USA.

"Our extensive study suggests the Israeli Acute Paralysis Virus (IAPV) may be a potential cause of colony collapse disorder," said one of the experts behind the discovery, epidemiologist W. Ian Lipkin of Columbia University in New York. "Our next step is to ascertain whether this virus - alone or in concert with other factors such as microbes, toxins and stressors - can induce CCD in healthy bees".

First widely reported last year, with a few cases as early as 2004, Colony Collapse Disorder's (CCD) lethal effects have resulted in a loss of 50 to 90 per cent of hives in a quarter of beekeeping operations across the USA.

The impacts of this are potentially huge because around a third of American crops, worth a total of US\$14.6 billion annually, are dependent on honey bees to pollinate them. "

Further details can be obtained from

<http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/node/1569>

but I bet that won't be the last we hear of it.

Last months AGM went off very well with little or no problems. Most of the Officers remain the same, the only change being that Jackie Harnett replaces Dorothy Mathews as Show Secretary. We thank Dorothy for her help, always done with a smile for everyone. Our Treasurer has managed to keep the subscriptions the same (£15-00) for this year, but warned that with the increase in BBKA capita-tion our subscriptions may have to go up next

year. Now is the time to remind you to pay your subscription before the end-of-year deadline, for after then the cost goes up by £1-00 to £16-00. The programme for 2008 is complete and will be issued to you all before the end of the year. I thank all who have offered to help, it is a delight and a pleasure to have the programme completed early and with little hassle, but I again ask for ideas for future years, there must be something that will make a change from the run-of-the-mill offerings.

Rob Andrews has now offered to run a Basic Examination course. Anyone wishing to take the exam should see him. Do note that the examination is very simple, does not involve any written paper and is a test of your ability to open and examine a colony of bees and to show an examiner that you understand what you see there. In addition there's a few simple questions on basic beekeeping. The examiner will be some local beekeeper appointed by the BBKA who is only too keen to see that as many people pass the exam as possible. The examination is always held during the summer time so you all have plenty of time to find out just what is involved. The only condition is that any candidate must have had bees for at least one year.

It is difficult to be involved with beekeeping without at some time coming across the name of Eva Crane. Sadly she died on September the 6th age 95.

She was made the honorary life president of the International Bee Research Association in 1986, and the same year she was appointed OBE. It is when we look at her achievements that we see why. Eva Crane was a towering figure in the field of beekeeping, one of its most knowledgeable practitioners and prolific historian, and a powerful champion of bees as a scientific subject. Her career in the field began when she was given a hive as a wedding present in 1942; she became interested not in the bees themselves but in, as she put it, "how they worked, how different peoples have kept bees, which bees and why, and why they keep them in the hives they do".

She never lost her hunger for "exciting bee things", travelled all over the world in search of

them, and she produced numerous books admired for their encyclopaedic and authoritative treatment of their subject matter. She visited, among many countries, Vietnam, Nepal, Uganda, Egypt, Malaysia and Russia, observing along the way that "this curious passion for a small insect can transcend barriers of politics, race and language, and bring strangers together as friends"

Eva Crane established the Eva Crane Trust to advance the science of apiology and encouraged bee research for the public benefit, and the Eva Crane Library, now held at the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, holds about 60,000 scientific papers and a unique collection of 130 different bee journals, many of them dating back to their first issues in the 19th century and in some cases representing the only complete sets in existence.

Eva Crane was a true giant of a figure in international as well as national beekeeping the likes of which we may never see again. *(Some of the above notes are taken from her obituary in the Times Newspaper)*

Our annual Christmas dinner this year will be held at The Falcon at Hilton. It will be on Monday the 17th of December at 7-30pm. Please let Sal know if you wish to go. The cost is £15-95 each and he requests you pay him to confirm your intention to be there.

Wednesday December the 5th is the night of the annual quiz and social get-to-gether with beekeepers from Durham, Hexham, Newcastle and Richmond. As before it will be held at Houghall College, Durham. Last years winners were Richmond, so they will be setting the questions this year and I understand "it will be fun". You are all invited and we look forward to seeing you there. No special knowledge of bees or beekeeping is required. Car sharing should be possible.

The gales have now done their bit and every colour of leaf is now on the floor, millions of them, but it was wonderful while it lasted. The birds are thoroughly enjoying themselves scavenging among them all.

Kindest regards to you all,



bryan@hateley.me.uk

A diplomat remembers a lady's birthday but forgets her age.

Secretary; Ian Brown, 48, Thames Avenue, Guisborough, TS14 8AF. Tel: 01287 632851

Meetings held, from September to April, in Lingfield Farm, Countryside Centre, Middlesbrough, on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7.15pm
Newcomer's are welcome.

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson;
Tel. 01947 840723 or Tel/Fax 01947 893811
Email:- tony@stoneleabees.wanadoo.co.uk
Stonelea Apiaries, 1, Dalehouse Bank, Staithes,
Cleveland. TS13 5AN.
Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.
Honey bought and sold.

John R. Allen

LONGNEWTON GRANGE BEEKEEPERS SUPPLIES

THE GRANGE, Phone: 01642 585896
BACK LANE, Fax: 01642 585896
LONGNEWTON, Home: 01642582460
STOCKTON-ON-TEES. TS21 1BN Mobile: 07814 576785
EMAIL: beekeepingsupplies@longnewton.fsworld.co.uk