

# Bromley Bee News Monthly Update Published by the Bromley Beekeepers

Welcome to the **December 2004** issue of Bromley News.



Steven Turner looking through Greg Boon's bees from [www.wholesomehoney.co.uk](http://www.wholesomehoney.co.uk)

Firstly, apologies for the late newsletter and a belated happy Christmas and New Year.

## **Wax Moth in Supers**

I'm not expecting to find any wax moth damage this Spring thanks to a friend with a large freezer. I was able to deep freeze all my supers which should kill all the stages of the Greater Wax Moth. I store all my wet supers on a spare floor board in the garage with several sheets of newspaper between each of them as a further barrier and seal.

## **Nucleus Hives**

My experiences during the 2004 season has highlighted the need to super nucleus hives to prevent valuable breeding space being used for honey storage; bees will naturally prefer to go up when confined in boxes. If you're planning on making a nucleus hive for queen raising or increases do consider the problem of fitting a super. One of my weaker five frame nucleuses managed to completely fill a full sized Langstroth super.

### Other News

With this newsletter you should find a proposal by Mike Oliver for forming a new bee improvement group. Please consider this and contact Mike directly Tel: 020-8654-5435.

[Download Application Form PDF](#)

### National Beekeeping Events

**Saturday 16th April 2005 - The British Beekeepers Association Spring Convention** at Stoneleigh-Park Exhibition and Conference Centre, Warwickshire CV8 2LS. Opens 09:00–1700.

**21th - 26th August 2005 - Apimondia 2005 Dublin Ireland.** 39th Apimondia Congress of the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations. This is the first time that the Apimondia Congress has been held in Ireland. <http://www.apimondia2005.com/home.html>

**20th - 22nd October 2005 - National Honey Show** at the RAF museum, Hendon, London. <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>

### Apis-UK a FREE Online Beekeeping Magazine

Apis-UK December issue No.30 prints to 30 sides of A4. Contents: Editorial; Beekeeping news; Bee press; Research News; Articles: The British Beekeepers' Association website Steven Turner; Bees and Magnetic Fields (part 1 of 3) Ian Rumsey; The Sorcerer's Apprentice Mike Oliver; Drastic Action Chad Cryer; Varroa Update; Durham Beekeepers' Association Proposition to the BBKA Annual Delegates' Meeting January 2005; Fact File Tropilaelaps Clarae; Historical Note Rev WC Cotton; Readers Letters: Mary White, Christopher Clayton, Christopher Beale, Christine Clifton; Diary of events; Quote of the Month and more. Total D/L 376KB. <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters04/apis-uk1204.htm>

### Woman's Hour Radio Four

You may think bees require nothing less than rolling fields of clover to make their honey, buzzing around in a country idyll. But urban beekeepers have found that the gardens, parks and inevitable neglected waste ground of a town or city provide ample foraging for their honeybees.

Photographers Jill Mead and Steve Benbow harvest around a tonne of honey, including that harvested from their hive, on the roof of their flat, overlooking Tower Bridge in London. Sara Parker donned her veil and protective suit to visit these city bees and their dedicated keepers. Listen to the interview from the BBC site:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2003\\_45\\_wed\\_03.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2003_45_wed_03.shtml)

### Steven Turner

### Apiary News

Back in circulation after my trip to Spain picking about two tonnes of olives I was quickly reminded that I had not done my bit on the newsletter.

You will have seen in BeeCraft that Thornes are offering beekeeping bits and pieces at knock down prices. If there are enough people interested Clive was going to make the trip there and pick up all we wanted, which would save on carriage, but it now seems that the deadline is too near and we may have to give the idea a miss. Anyway have a look at the advertisement and see if we can still organise something.

I gather in my absence a pleasant time was had by all at the December meeting despite not opening any hives due to weather conditions and that also goes for the forthcoming meeting on January 2nd when we have our usual BBQ and mulled wine. This is a good time to bring along your spouse who trembles at the sound of the word bee and gives them the chance to meet us all.

**On Tuesday the 18th January 2005 at 7:30** we have the first of the winter series of talks, and this one is "Weather and Folklore" by Ian Currie. I am assured that this talk is most interesting and explores all the old sayings that were used in forecasting before marvellous computers were used costing millions of pounds. Personally when I was a boy at school I used to say they will

never forecast weather until they can control it, and 70 years on I am still of that same opinion.

For the **15th February 2005** meeting I have booked Terry Clare whose talk is entitled "IPM – Where are we now" Watch this space, all will be revealed.

This brings me to the most important message of all which is to wish you the very best for Christmas and as had been said many times before full to bursting supers next year.

***Peter Springall***

**Mike Oliver has written a series of witty articles about his beekeeping experiences which we are please to publish here. E.d.**

## Member Article

### The Sorcerer's Apprentice

At the age of 89 my mother still has the same razor-sharp sense of humour she displayed in the Maternity Ward back in 1942 when she tried to swap me for a better-looking baby (yes, I know, "must have had plenty to choose from" ...thank you, dear Reader, it's singers we need, not comedians). Apparently she was even prepared to throw in half a book of ration coupons as an incentive. Back in late August this year she suggested that my favourite nephew would be ideal to help me lift off my supers.

Let me tell you about the lad (he's actually 37 now, going on 12.) He is 6 feet 3 inches tall, has the strength of a Titan and is known in the family as Un-even Steven, due to his tendency towards uncontrollable feet. In fact he is so clumsy that he has a government health warning stamped on his forehead. You may think, knowing my own tendency to find the most awkward way to do things, that it runs in the family. You could be right, which is probably why he is my favourite nephew. Actually he is one of nature's nice people but don't tell him I said so.

He is also very gullible. Like the time when he was a kid and I was out walking with him.

Spying a rather dilapidated seagull flying overhead he asked me what it was. I replied that it was a white buzzard and at his request wrote down its Latin name, *Raptus regalitur*. It was several months later in the classroom that he apparently corrected the teacher when she said that the Latin name of the buzzard was *Buteo buteo*. In fairness she did have to go and ask the languages department who advised her that *Raptus regalitur* meant "royally screwed".

He is married to a delightful lady (who I genuinely adore) whose mission in life is to control his every waking moment – for his own good of course.

When I arrived at his house to pick him up for the apiary harvest, she sternly beckoned me into the kitchen and said, "Right, turn out your pockets!" She then confiscated my poker cards and dice before allowing him out of the house. Of course, like most sensible beekeepers, I keep a crib board and a couple of spare packs of cards under the roof of one of my hives but she wasn't to know that.

When we arrived at my Apiary in Barnmead Road, just down from Kenthouse Station, I kitted him out in my spare suit – it was small on him but fitted okay inside his size 13 wellies. Looking like a white-clad version of Darth Vader, he immediately started waving furiously at a passing Eurostar train on the nearby track and became the first beekeeper's assistant in history ever to almost cause a rail disaster. After a few well-chosen words from the driver, shouted from the window of the cab, he managed to release his air-brakes and proceed onwards. Steve just sniffed and said he must be French. If so, all I can say is that he must have been a brilliant linguist to produce such a wide range of English expletives.

I guided him warily towards the hives and was relieved to find that he only tripped over once – flattening a nearby plot-holder's spinach in the process. Just as well, can't stand the disgusting weed myself.

Having explained that the idea was to lift off the supers in one go and carry them fifty yards on the wheelbarrow to where the car was parked, I lit the smoker. Taking my eye off him was a mistake, of course. He had bent down and picked up an entire hive with two supers and was effortlessly strolling off with it in his arms before I noticed. Having got it back onto its stand I showed him what we needed to do using chemical-clearer soaked cloth, smoker and hive tool. A disaster was narrowly averted when I snatched the cloth away from his face just before he could throw-up inside the veil. The mind boggles doesn't it?

Whilst waiting for the bees to clear he decided to help me by fixing the door on my hut. Actually it didn't really need fixing until after he had fixed it but the thought was there.

Having successfully moved the supers from three hives I told him firmly that the last hive was the one that was *not* full of gentle bees. I draped the cloth over the top of the supers, went and sat down on my bench, well out of the way, and waited. But demonstrating that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, he went over after a few minutes, lifted the cloth and peered in.

"They've gone down," he said firmly. Without further ado, he levered up the three supers on top with the hive tool, spoke sternly to the bees and wandered off with the boxes. To my amazement no bees chased him; there was not even a murmur of discontent. Of course, when I went to replace the roof they stormed out like a plague of winged piranha-fish and sent me packing. I am still trying to work that one out.

Having successfully loaded the car, I took the supers home and then we walked down to the local pub, the Joiner's Arms, for a beer and sandwich before going over to sort out the other apiary in Addiscombe.

Now, Steven has the face of an Adonis\* which had got him into some difficulties with older women when he was a youngster. He still has that effect on mature ladies who serve behind bars in pubs. I ordered a pint of Boddington's for him and a pint of Diesel for me and two ploughman's. The landlady shouldered the barmaid out of the way, exhibited what I seriously believe were not her own teeth in a broad grin and simpered all over Steven as she took over the pint-pulling. Sickening. He then proceeded to tell her all about beekeeping with authority of an expert. I could see the glazed look on her face just before she made her excuses and crept away.

There were no problems at the other apiary, as long as you don't count the cold frame and the avalanche of apples, and gracefully declining his offer to assist with the extracting, I took him home to his dear wife, who insisted on counting his pocket money to make sure I hadn't appropriated it.

- Incidentally I am reliably informed, by a Greek teacher of history that the reason the Greeks don't use lettuce in a Greek salad (or even grow the stuff apparently,) is to do with the legend of Adonis. As you know he was the fairest of the Gods and had gradually worked his way through all the (very willing) Goddesses. When he got to the point where he was about to boff Zeus's wife Hera, the old boy himself thought enough was enough. Adonis fell asleep in a field of lettuce and was found the next morning changed into a wilted lettuce. Hence to this day the Greeks regard lettuce as an anti-aphrodisiac.

**Mike Oliver**

## Diary Dates

**Sunday 2nd January 2005 - Branch BBQ and Mulled Wine** 11.45am onwards, all members and friends welcome.

**Tuesday 18th January 2005** - The first in the series of FREE winter lectures this one by Ian Currie entitled 'Weather and Folklore'. Starts 7:30pm at the apiary club house. Includes refreshments.

**Sunday 6th February 2005** - Branch Apiary Meeting. The opening of hives depends on the weather. starts 11:45am. Includes refreshments.

**Tuesday 15th February 2005** - A lecture by Terry Clare entitled 'Integrated Pest Management' (IPM for short).

Starts 7:30pm at the apiary club house. Includes refreshments.

### **For more information**

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### **Advertisements**

(free to members or £10.00 for non-members)

#### **David Harris**

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