

# Bromley Bee News Monthly Update

## Published by the Bromley Beekeepers



**Cover picture** from the December apiary meeting.

Welcome to the **February 2002** issue of Bromley News.

One of the gloomiest weekends this winter has just passed and on Monday afternoon we finally had some sunshine! Checking the garden I spotted some early crocuses and snowdrops flowering, always a good sign Spring is around the corner.



I visited **Park Beekeeping Supplies** to buy some anti-tamper labels, they do a nice yellow/black design with the words "Bee Keepers Association Kent Member" cost £3.95 for 500.



**Book Review by John Phipps (editor of Beekeepers' Quarterly)  
Medical Aspects of Beekeeping by Harry Riches.**

Published by the author. 86 pages, paperback. Illustrated with diagrams

This book was so fascinating that I read it through in one sitting when a winter Mediterranean storm raged around our home. The author, Dr Harry Riches, needs no introduction from me as he is so much part of the beekeeping scene that for me to comment on his credentials would be superfluous. It is sufficient to say that his long years in both beekeeping and medicine, holding high positions in both, combine to make him a unique expert on the topics within the book. Whilst some of the book contains papers previously published, particularly regarding allergies to bee stings, their inclusion within one volume makes this a useful resource for beekeepers and shows how things have moved on in the medical sense over the last few decades. But these papers too have been edited in places giving us an up to date account of what is now known.

Regarding problems associated with stings, Dr Riches outlines the biological events (quite technical, but so clear it is easy to follow with the aid of useful diagrams) that take place and shows how different groups of individuals can react to stings in different ways. He gives advice to beekeepers who are worried about stings, explains how they can be avoided and what treatment is possible both before and after someone is stung, or even in the long-term should immunotherapy be necessary. Anyone who reads this part of the book carefully will soon have all their fears allayed.

The rest of the publication deals with products from the hive - honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly and bee venom. He gives us information on each of the constituents - their make up, nutritional or medical value and is not afraid to be scornful of some of the fanciful or unsubstantiated claims which have been made about such products. Indeed, he doesn't hold back his punches for, whilst writing about royal jelly he says quite plainly "Royal jelly is of no benefit to humans. A waste of money!" whilst he is happy about the antibacterial and antifungal activities of propolis and its application externally he has strong reservations about its internal use. He questions too the value of bee stings for the relief of arthritic and other conditions and shows how 'magical cures' attributed to bee venom have other more likely causes.

An excellent book in which current information available on the topics has been provided, making it a practical, easily readable (with useful end of the chapter summaries), reliable and objective resource for beekeepers. Only £8.75 post paid from Northern Bee Books

**Internet**

The Scottish Beekeepers Association (SBA) have an excellent beekeeping website [www.users.zetnet.co.uk/scottish-beekeepers](http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/scottish-beekeepers)

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## Apiary News

Bees can be silly things at times, take for instance the ones in the observation hive. They were clustered on the brood frame then just prior to the cold snap before Christmas they decided to move up to the next frame deserting the brood then starting another batch of brood in the upper cells. Finally they split up trying to look after both batches only to fail due to insufficient bees and succumb, thus dashing my hopes of getting them through the winter.

A warm day less than a week ago revealed all the other stocks to be alive, but it all depends on sufficient stores being close to hand.

Thank you for the wonderful turnout on the occasion of the first Sunday of the New Year. Unfortunately we ran out of burgers and so the late arrivals had to eat cake but with 4 gallons of mulled wine available all was not lost.

I gather you enjoyed Derrick Sleeve's talk about some of his military adventures. What a life he must have had. I have heard many of his stories as he takes to the microphone during long spells on the 'BeeTour' coach but always manages to come up with something new. A pleasant change from beekeeping, thank you once again Derrick.



I am grateful to Barry for helping me with stone slabs leading up to the apiary. Everyone who has been that way so far has commented upon the improvement. You will also note that I have raised the beds on the right of the path, which will help to keep things tidier during the busy summer months.

I am looking forward to the talk by Peter Dalby on 'Therapeutic uses of Bee Products' on the **19th of this month**. I can't help thinking there must be something in it as I am back on the Badminton Court after a five week break and have not had the slightest indication of discomfort with my knee since the bee sting treatment. Of course Peter's talk is not just bee venom but includes benefits available from honey, royal jelly, pollen, propolis and beeswax. Once again an evening not to be missed as this talk promises to be something quite different.

Are you aware that we can use all the honey you can spare for the series of summer shows our Chairman is organising? You will get over £2 ( 3 Euro) which I am sure most of you will find better than you can do by yourself.

Watch this space. Peter Springall

### **Diary Dates to remember**

**Tuesday 19th February 2002**

Peter Dalby "Therapeutic uses of bee products"

7.30pm at the club house

### **For more information**

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