

# Bromley Bee News Monthly Update

## Published by the Bromley Beekeepers

Welcome to the **February 2003** issue of Bromley News.



**Photo: Tea break after Brian Palmer (middle) talk on "My trip to Apimondia in South Africa"**

The first Winter lecture given by Brian Palmer went down well with everybody, the slide show and talk gave a fascinating insight to beekeeping in South Africa. Because of extreme poverty, stealing has become a way of life, even honey and combs are stolen. We heard about a commercial beekeeper who had to keep his bee hives in a razor wire enclosure to protect them not from dangerous animals but from the human kind.



During the last few month I have been working on a new website for Bees *for* Development. This charity helps overseas beekeepers with training and provides basic information to help them manage bees in a sustainable way. When their new site is launched you will be able to buy your beekeeping books and videos in the online store. I hope this new site will be a focus for supporting Bees for Development and perhaps get a few more Bromley members to support them by subscribing to their journal.  
URL: <http://www.beesfordevelopment.org>

This month we have an excellent feature article written by branch members Robin & Jenny Spon-Smith. We hope this will encourage other members to put pen to paper and submit them to the editor.

**The Bee Inspector on BBC Radio 4** Call in the bee expert. The Bee Inspector Sundays 2 - 23 February, 2.45pm on BBC Radio 4. Who do you call when your bees stop buzzing or the honey goes off? Why, the Bee Inspector of course. He may be the man from the Ministry, but David Kemp is the saviour of many a bee-keeper. What's more he's full of fascinating facts about these extraordinary little creatures and how they live. But does he get stung often? (Thanks to Greg Snell for sending me this).

Improved web version of this newsletter with pictures

URL: <http://www.kentbee.com/bromley/newsletters/febbb03.htm>

Apis-UK The free Beekeeping web magazine and newsletter

URL: <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters/apis-uk0103.htm>

*Steven Turner*





(Photo's) New Year BBQ and mulled wine

### **Therry Apiculture Northern France**

On our regular trips to northern France we have paid several visits to Therry Apiculture, at Bouin Plumoison, on the D349 road about 56 miles south-east of Boulogne. This consists of a beekeeping museum and shop. The museum contains an interesting collection of old hives and other pieces of antique beekeeping equipment. The shop has a limited amount of equipment for sale - such as smokers and gloves - and a wide range of honey and bee products, such as sweets, biscuits, honey vinegar, mead and so on.



There is also a small auditorium in which there is a video concerning honey bees and beekeeping permanently showing. (Commentary only in French, unfortunately!) There is also an indoor hive, whose exit to the open air is via a glass sided passage.

One of the most impressive features is a cellar containing a large quantity of barrels of mead and mead making equipment. Mr. Therry describes mead as "La boisson des

Gaulois" - the drink of the Gauls.

Behind the premises is a bee garden with several hives, but evidently most of his colonies must be kept elsewhere.

When we visited Bouin Plumoison last September we found a party of French schoolchildren there, being shown how honey was extracted. Surprisingly, some of them had apparently never tasted honey, and a few turned up their noses in disgust when offered pieces of comb - despite being assured by Robin that it was 'delicieux'! When the children were taken into the garden there was no suggestion of veils being provided, and Mr. Therry even encouraged them to touch bees. In this country the fear of a claim for damages if one of the children was stung would probably discourage anybody from doing that.

Also present was a young lady reporter from a local radio station. Realising that Robin was a beekeeper from England, she recorded an interview with him. We didn't discover whether it was ever broadcast!

Therry Apiculture is well worth a visit by any beekeeper who finds himself in the Pas de Calais. It is advertised as open Mondays to Fridays from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m., on Saturdays 'toute la journée' (all day - whatever that may mean), and on Sundays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. except in January. It advertises guided visits for parties of more than 20. The address is 923 rue Nationale, but it is easily found as Bouin Plumoison is only a small village.

*Robin & Jenny Spon-Smith*

### **Apiary News**

As I write this at the end of January I wonder how our little charges are facing up to this cold snap. The bright spell at the beginning of the month gave me a chance to lift the lids of all the Mini Nucs and give them a layer of candy on the tops of the frames. An inspection a few days later confirmed that they had found it and were making welcome use of it. Let us hope there is sufficient left to carry them over this latest cold spell.

Last month's talk by Brian Palmer seems to have been appreciated by all, and although titled 'My trip to Apimondia' the guided tour of South Africa which led on from the main subject went down particularly well.

This month we have the return of one of our popular speakers James Morton who will give us an updated version on the latest on the EFB, AFB and Varroa situation, something we can ill afford to ignore.

The weather doesn't look promising for the meeting on the 2nd Feb, but who knows the weatherman may well smile on us as he has done on many occasions in the past. Whatever happens I am sure that those of you who do come along will enjoy the tea and biscuits if nothing else. Any time there is a warm spell it could pay to lift the cover boards to see how the food situation is. Even borrowing a frame of stores from another hive could save the day if you find a stock is particularly empty. In the meantime I wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you soon.

*Peter Springall*

## Diary Dates

### Winter evening lecture

**Tuesday 18th February 2003 7:30pm**

James Morton talks on " Bee health update".

**Saturday 1st March 2003 3:00pm** Medway Beekeepers Association presents Brenda Ball of Rothamsted "The Varroa Virus Story". Brenda is famous for her work on bee viruses and varroa. Come and hear what a virus is and how it works in terms that we all understand. Location: Presentation Suite, Civic Centre, Strood. Easy access from M2, M20, A2 and A228. Free entry, refreshments and unlimited parking. All beekeepers and their friends are invited.

**Sunday 2nd March 2003 11:45am**

The branch apiary meeting. Beekeeping demonstrations and hive management. Tea and biscuits provided.

### Winter evening lecture

**Tuesday 18th March 2003 7:30pm**

Maurice Field will talk on "Managing bees with minimum medication".

**Sunday 6th April 2003 11:45am**

The branch apiary meeting. Beekeeping demonstrations and hive management. Tea and biscuits provided.

### Winter evening lecture

**Tuesday 15th April 2003 7:30pm**

Martin Buckle "Doing things with beeswax".

### For more information

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