

Badger and Beehives.

A Mystery

I visited my apiary today to see if the bees were flying and I took a photograph (shown below) of what I found. The mouse guard had been pulled away and bent.

The hive appears to be undamaged and the bees were flying happily.

The hive is in the corner of a cider orchard in Somerset, surrounded by a hedge and gate which is locked. The only access is across a rhyne (water channel) full of water.



Judith Cowen, Weston BKA

Have any readers experienced a similar thing happening to a hive? If you have and you would like to share any thoughts with us on this please email the editor, Sharon Blake, at sharon.blake@bbka.org.uk

Paul Abbott writes:

The most likely animal cause of mouse guard displacement would have been inquisitive Badgers. They often pass through apiaries, with minimal interference to hives.

However, during prolonged periods of severe cold weather, with frozen ground, they can start to starve; and learn that within a beehive there are ample stores of edible goodies: Including honey, beeswax, pollen, brood, and bees: A veritable feast.

In the cold spring of 2013, a couple of my home-apiary hives were devastated by badger attack. See the attached photographs. These show badgers casing the joint, before knocking over hives, and then running amok, enjoying a nourishing nocturnal banquet, at the expense of *Apis mellifera*.

A fox can be seen in the middle photo. These show an interest in beehives, but are very wary of the much stronger badger.

