



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

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Number 603

Hon. Secretary:  
Vacant

The Federation, its Council, and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

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## Future Events

19th-21st October 2006

National Honey Show

RAF Museum Hendon

## BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

**Your Berkshire Beekeepers Federation is in need of a volunteer to act as General Secretary.**

### IN THE APIARY: October.

There is a splendid MDF mounted display board that belongs to a Berkshire association that is temporarily in my possession entitled 'The Beekeeper's Year'

Nicely tinted and coloured illustrations showing industrious apiarists with slightly more flair to the cut of the trouser and length to the hair than today but helpful in preparing this piece because it firmly states "October: feeding time".

It's likely that many apiarists these days are feeding later produced honey to their colonies, perhaps 'ivy' of which more later and perhaps some of those at the cutting edge of our hobby maybe investing in such specialist products as 'Meliose' offered by Thornes and produced by Roquette in France (They own several sweetener companies throughout the world including two in the UK that I know of) claiming essential nutrients for the bees as well as the carbohydrate content. However if like me you have been taught that bees often do better fed on sugar syrup in the autumn even when left with adequate honey stores we will proceed on that topic if gentle reader you wish to continue.

The 1960's Beekeeper's Year in the October illustration does confirm the belief that "it's honey over cluster that counts. Bees can starve with oodles of honey on sides if they cannot break the cluster to move" and also "feed light colonies generously" referring of course to hefting the hives to assess the weight of stores. If the hives literally feel 'glued-down' then they are OK but should have a full super above the brood (with excluder removed) if with one arm you can move them then they are "light." The excluder should be removed to allow the clustered bees to move-up to the stores above carrying the queen with them and because metal surfaces may condense water in the coldest conditions.

Most of us know to feed heavy syrup, 2 lbs of white sugar to 1 pint of warm water ratio in the Autumn (light syrup 1 lb to a pint in early spring) I'm glad to see that in their 2006/2007 brochure Thornes have clarified their instructions for the use of their contact feeder somewhat i.e. they no longer indicate that you can just fill to within 1 inch of the top and then top-up with water, they do stress the importance of stirring the syrup down until the sugar is substantially dissolved, if you don't do that you'll probably find that some sugar has re-crystallized into glassy pieces in the feeder and the bees have taken more water than they should, this can contribute to bee dysentery.