

The Extractor



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From your Editor Netia Lascelles

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I hope everyone had a Happy Christmas and some good beekeeping equipment among the presents!

John Chudley, as is his custom, will have given his bees a gift of some candy on Christmas Day!

He is probably very wise, as there has been an unusual amount of activity in the bee garden this winter, so the bees may well run short of stores. I will be trying my hand at making fondant soon.

Editor

Exploits of a suburban swarm collector

It was a warm summer afternoon when we had a call from Martin Holman asking if we could collect a small swarm from Stoke Mandeville. It was causing concern because it was close to the road. On arriving it was evident that not

only was it close to the road; it was actually in the *middle* of the road....settled quite happily on the plastic 'Keep Left' bollard on the traffic island! Well, you can imagine the confused looks from passing drivers as I stood on the island in my bee suit desperately trying to sweep the bees into a nucleus box.

When I had collected a reasonable number of them, I placed the box on the ground and tried to warn approaching drivers to wind up their windows. In their eyes, of course, I was a completely mad person dressed in a weird suit waving her arms around... and in the middle of the road of all places. My concern was not so much about people being stung, but that with each passing car allowing bees to fly in through the windows, my swarm would rapidly be depleted. It was only a small one after all and, at this rate, it would be completely re-distributed around Stoke Mandeville by tea time!

With some trepidation, I left the box on the traffic island to collect the remaining flyers and we returned later that evening to retrieve it. As evening fell and the last of the stragglers entered the box, the bollard suddenly lit up like a beacon! You could almost hear the cry go out.... 'Lights on girls – everybody back on the bollard!!'

Karen Dadswell



The beekeepers of Slovenia

I had an uncle who was a spy in WW2. In 1943 he was parachuted into Slovenia and moved up into Austria with a group of Yugoslav partisans where he disappeared without trace. In May 1999 I myself made a trip to Slovenia, retracing my uncle's journey to find out how he

died. The unexpected bonus was to discover an enchanting country with a passion for bees.

Slovenia is largely alpine, with glacial lakes and pretty, unspoiled villages. I saw a countryside carpeted with flowers, dotted with old-fashioned hayricks and everywhere the sight of brightly coloured beehives stacked together under chalet roofs on the hillsides. It was like Austria, but stepped back in time.



Slovenians are immensely proud of their expertise in beekeeping which goes back 200 years to the work of Anton Jansa who developed many of the methods and equipment in use today. They specialise in the grey Carniolan bee which is thrifty and well-suited to their snowy winters.

The Museum of Apiculture in Radovljica is sheer heaven for beekeepers. They have on display a collection of antique front boards which were intricately painted with scenes from the Bible. Many of the hives in the collection were painted with scary devils and dragons too, which were thought to ward off evil. It is nice to think the bees were housed so decoratively in the old days.

Incidentally we returned from our trip, still uncertain how my uncle died in that ghastly winter of 1944, despite meeting several old men who were part of his group. But our sunlit walk up in the high mountains where he hid from the Germans was most moving and rewarded us with a forest floor thick with hellebores in full flower.

Netia Lascelles

Peter Smith's reading matter

Peter has been keeping bees for over 15 years. He has travelled widely and is a regular subscriber to a number of beekeeping magazines. *The Extractor* asked him to summarize the most worthwhile.

Bee-craft is our national magazine and is the mouthpiece for the British Beekeepers Association. In its new A4 glossy format it is both entertaining and educational. It is produced monthly and costs £22 a year.

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American Bee Journal is my favourite foreign journal. Good on international bee news, it contains an excellent question and answer section. It has a glossy A4 format and arrives monthly. Much of it revolves around the Americans' preferred Langstroth system which is not relevant to us in the UK. But it is worthwhile, even though it is expensive at £25 a year. ABJ@dadant.com

Tel: 001 (217) 847 3660

Bee Culture is its American rival. It is small format with lighter articles. Produced monthly it costs roughly £20 a year including postage.

kim@BeeCulture.com

La Santé de l'Abeille. Written in French, it comes out six times a year. This small format magazine covers mostly aspects of health and hygiene in the hive. Cost £14 approx.

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Tel: 0033 (0)2 43 72 58 91

Bee World. This is the mouthpiece for IBRA in Cardiff and is a highly technical quarterly magazine which comes free with IBRA membership. It was founded to give access to bee research. This is to a certain extent duplicated by the internet, so at £40 a year has lost many of its subscribers (including me).

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The Beekeepers Quarterly. Published by Northern Bee Books who also produce second-hand bee books.

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