

## NHBKA November 2012 Newsletter

If Kevin McCloud did a 'Grand Designs for Bees', then I'm sure the Apimaye hive would feature. The Apimaye hive was developed in Turkey following a government backed consultation between the Turkish Beekeeping Association and nine universities. Turkey is second in the world to China for the total number of honeybee hives in use, but ten years ago was only seventh in terms of the amount of honey produced; the result of poor beekeeping practices and poor beehives. In 2004, the Turkish government instigated a programme to rectify Turkey's position in the league of honey producing countries; the Apimaye hive was the result. At our November indoor meeting, Chris Evans from Cambridge BKA introduced us to bee keeping in Turkey and followed this with a tour of the Apimaye hive.

Turkey is on a different scale to the UK in beekeeping terms; one Turkish district association alone has as many members as the total BBKA membership and the ownership of 500 hives is not uncommon. In fact Turkey has in excess of 4 million bee hives, many of these are the traditional log hives. Of the frame hives these are mostly Langstroths, there are no Nationals, or WBCs.

Turkey is on the Silk Road so adulterated honey is quite common; as a result honey comb is much more popular in Turkey than honey in jars as it is guaranteed to be 'proper' honey. One common comb format uses two circular enclosures within a Langstroth frame to produce circular cakes of honeycomb. The honey itself tends to be rather dark as a large proportion comes from trees. Beekeepers provide wax to the companies that produce foundation, much in the same way as the UK, but in huge quantities. One interesting addition in the wax production process is the annealing of foundation, giving a product that can be bent and doesn't break.

The honeybee of Turkey is the Anatolian bee (*Apis mellifera anatoliaca*), a slightly smaller bee than the Western honey bee (*Apis mellifera*). The Anatolian bee was dismissed by Brother Adam and he didn't use them in his development of the Buckfast Bee. The Anatolian bee is not immune from disease, Varroa, Foul Brood, and Small Hive beetle are all seen in Turkey; thyme essential oil being used in the treatment of Varroa.

The Apimaye hive, or more correctly the Apimaye Thermo Hive is basically a Langstroth hive and is constructed of UV treated high quality food grade plastic. It is rather chunky and looks as though it may have come from Denmark rather than Turkey. The sides of the brood boxes and supers have a moulded double wall system filled with insulation. It has been designed to provide air circulation to prevent mould and condensation. The type of construction means that there are no nooks and crannies for the wax moth larva.

Three types of hive are available, a Normal Brood hive, a Swarm Hive (supports 2 colonies), and a Queen hive (supports 4 colonies), but actually all these different variations are possible from the same basic hive structure. For example, a simple divider in the brood chamber turns the Normal Brood hive into a Swarm hive able to accommodate two separate nuclei colonies. Chris Evans brought one brood box and a super that was an amalgamation of the different type of hive. The brood box and supers are fixed together with a lock latch device that also serves as a varying handle. The latch can also be used to connect several hives together for transportation.

Several parts of the hive construction are multi-functional; the castellated support for the frames can be reversed if castellation is not required; the entrance can be flipped over for both summer and winter. The landing stage is available in different colours so that when the hive is functioning as a swarm hive with two colonies, the bees can identify their own colony. There is a queen entrance towards the top of the brood box; this will deter the production of castes and as virgin queens leave by highest exit and she will leave with a very small retinue.

Chris Evans has suggested to the manufacturers that the queen indicators on the front of the hive could reflect the colour coding used for queens -

White – 1 (or 6), e.g. 2011, 2016

Yellow – 2 (or 7)

Red – 3 (or 8)

Green – 4 (or 9)

Blue – 5 (or 0)

I'm sure you don't need reminding of the mnemonic 'Will You Raise Good Bees'. Perhaps someone knows a Turkish equivalent.

The Hoffman-type self-spacing frames comprise two halves that can be pulled apart and snapped back together, this facilitates the management of new foundation, even wild comb can be secured between the two halves – no more bits of wool!

Chris was asked about the sterilisation of the hive, as a wooden hive would be scorched. A detergent can be used for the hives parts and frames. If sterilisation is needed then Tesco Standard Bleach contains the right ingredients. A solution of 9 parts water : 1 part bleach, and a 20 minute immersion. I think this was one slight issue with the hive, in that you would need a large immersion tank to deal with the whole hive body.

Perhaps surprisingly, the cost of a new Apimaye hive and super is not too dissimilar to the cost of a new National – and this doesn't include the discount that Derrick thought we might be able to negotiate!

It is obvious a great deal of thought has gone into the design of the hive and since the introduction of the hive and the improvement in beekeeping training, Turkey is now fourth in the league of honey producing nations.

Chris has a number of different types of hive that he manages but was emphatic in his choice of the Apimaye as his preferred beehive.

Thank you to Chris Evans for an entertaining evening and sharing his experience of an important development in beekeeping that we may need to embrace.

No doubt we all have packs of new equipment in the garage or shed waiting for an opportune moment to assemble, or perhaps you are waiting for the winter sales to snap up a bargain. There is a list of winter activities in an article by Maggy Hendry in this month's BBKA News. She finishes with – 'Sit back by a blazing fire with a good bee book, a cup of tea and crumpets with honey' – sound advice, although members may be tempted to modify the beverage and/or the fare.

No more indoor meetings this year. The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> 2013 – a presentation by Peter Tomkins formerly of the Rothamstead Research Laboratory whose talk is entitled 'Colony Compromise Disorder'. Hope to see you all then. In the meantime, although a little early, a Very Merry Christmas to you all and Best Wishes for 2013.