After a very brief period in hospital Dr Eva Crane passed away peacefully on the afternoon of Thursday 6 September 2007. She was, for fifty years, a towering figure in the world of apiculture and the legacy of her written work has been, and will continue to be, a beacon to guide and inspire for many years to come.

A mathematician and physicist by degree she turned her considerable intellect to bees and beekeeping in 1942. In 1949 she established this organization and became its first Director until her “retirement” in 1984. After which she went on to write more books and papers and in particular concentrated on her two exceptional tomes: 

**Bees and beekeeping science** (Heinemann 1990)

**The world history of beekeeping and honey hunting** (Duckworth 1999)

While we grieve her passing we are also thankful for all she gave to the world of bees and beekeeping – she has no equal. A memorial service in celebration of her inspirational life will be held in the not too distant future and the next issue of *Journal of Apicultural Research* will pay full homage to her work.

A lasting and tangible memorial will be established to honour Dr Crane. If you wish to support this then please send any donations, made payable to “The Eva Crane Memorial Fund” to 16 North Road, Cardiff.
This bee meeting is the most prestigious in North America growing from modest beginnings in 1955 to an event lasting for a very full week.

The programme was most comprehensive with literally something for everyone from the newest novice to weathered professional beekeepers of many years standing. In essence it is an event of two parts. The first part of the week is given over to workshops and lectures all of a practical bent. It really is practical with a fully-fledged apiary set up in the University grounds for hands-on experience. There are qualifications to be obtained and by the end of the week a number of people graduated as Master Beekeepers. Indeed, all who worked in the apiary with temperatures of around 40ºC and humidity of over 90% deserved medals as well.

Having such a reputation means that the conference attracts speakers of the highest calibre who play a significant role in world, not just national, apiculture. These people give willingly of their time in providing a series of lectures and workshops that constitute the Beekeeping Short Course and also more formal lectures in the second part of the week.

Subjects included:
Bee Genetics, Africanized Honey Bees, Varroa control, queen breeding, drone anatomy, bee mites, hygienic behaviour, small hive beetle update and, of course the latest on Colony Collapse Disorder (See Buzz Extra 2 2007 that covered all the same ground as here). There were talks on pheromones, swarm catching, over wintering, quality control of bee products, honey production, cookery, mead making, wax casting and British beekeeping. Other lectures on: viruses, benefits of varied genetics, genetically modified crops and bees, native pollinators and more – as I said a very full programme.

The speakers included:
Michael Badger, Jennifer Berry, Dewey Caron, Anita Collins, Clarence Collinson, Larry Connor, Ernesto Guzman, Jeff Pettis, Diana Sammataro, Ken Schramm, John Skinner, Dave Tarpy, Claire Waring, Michael Young and many more whom I must ask to forgive me for not being listed here.

This year’s event saw a number of notable luminaries of the organization stepping down. Dewey Caron, the programme organizer of this event in his home university, retired after 40 years devotion to bees and bee science. A long-standing supporter of IBRA we thank him for his devotion and wish him well although it is fairly certain that he is not going to disappear off the bee map.

Kim Flottum, the ever-busy editor of Bee Culture and Chairman of EAS for the last eight years steps back to Chairman Emeritus and Jim Bobb of Pennsylvania takes over. Again we thank Kim for his work with EAS and his efforts in helping promote IBRA – long may he continue to do so.

Ann Harman is probably IBRA’s most stalwart member in the whole of the USA. She has been an EAS Board member for many years and now steps down. I am sure this will not be to take life any easier but to divert her phenomenal energy into other projects and tasks with bees and all matters bee related. A Master of Beekeeping, and a good many
other skills as well, we thank her for what she has done and look forward to whatever comes next.

The trade exhibition consisted of over 40 stands most of which achieved a remarkable standard of presentation and content. The IBRA stand proved to be very popular which resulted in very successful sales. Not only that but overall interest in IBRA was most encouraging. Many visitors to the stand went away very informed about our work and several asked if there was any chance of me being one of the official speakers next year when the meeting is held in Murray, Kentucky. All I can say is that, if invited, I would be flattered and pleased to present a talk on the latest IBRA developments and publications.

Being seen and being active in the dissemination of relevant material is important. IBRA needs to continue having a presence at events like this if it is to remain highly regarded on the world stage. We are grateful to the Wales Trade International for making this possible.

Richard Jones

Book Review


This is a **must** for anyone interested not only in mead but also in wine making. It was first published in 2003 but has not been previously marketed outside the USA. IBRA hopes to remedy this long overdue omission.

Many books have been written about mead and it would be fair to say I have a good few of them. In 2006, on the advice of no less a person than the Editor of *Bee Culture*, I purchased this book by Ken Schramm, an established mead maker and winner of numerous awards. Ken is the founder of the oldest American mead competition, the *Mazer Cup* and so deeply into his art that he cultivates over 100 varieties of fruit in his home orchard as a hands-on way of perfecting his melomels and meads.

I have referred to the book and used its recipes and guidance for over a year and as a result produced excellent meads. I found the book to be a very valuable tool, excellent in content covering every possible angle in producing quality mead. It is a book for the layperson as well as the academic. It is clear to follow and simple to understand. Further, it gives the reader an insight into varieties of yeasts and different sugars in honey, their importance as well as the effects they have on the end product.

The writing style reflects the man himself, lots of knowledge, user friendly, an easy approach and with witty overtones. At the final dinner at EAS 2007 Ken provided a bottle of one of his finest meads - a Grand Cru - the Royal Coachman Mead vintage 2005. This was a ruby rich Melomel. I must say it was the finest mead I have ever tasted with plenty of character like its maker and, joy of joys, the recipe for this particular mead is in the book.

If you want to make mead as a hobby just for drinking or maybe even to exhibit at your local honey show this is a “must have” book. It is more than a book on mead it is a reading experience, and by following its instructions you will win prizes at any show.

**Michael Young**
Professional Chef, Honey Judge and Beekeeper.
Pollinating wild blueberries in Maine and Nova Scotia

While on a recent holiday in eastern Canada IBRA Member, Andrew Poulter, had a unique opportunity to spend time with beekeepers and commercial blueberry growers. Here he tells of his experiences and gives a lucid insight into an operation of mind blowing scale.

Blueberries grow wild in large areas of northeastern USA and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada. Blueberry land received little attention in the past. The crop was picked by hand and yields were low. Blueberries have been canned since the American Civil War, but most of the crop used to be consumed locally whilst fresh, or turned into preserves. In recent years, however, large acreages have been commercially cultivated, principally in Maine and Nova-Scotia. Modern methods of cultivation and harvesting have dramatically increased yields, which now can often exceed 3,000 lbs/acre (3,400 kgs/hectare). Large freezing plants have been built and International markets developed for the crop, which is now recognised as a premium product with substantial health benefits. Wild blueberries command a top price on world markets and are now ‘Big Business’.

Perhaps the biggest breakthrough in the cultivation of wild blueberries was the recognition of the importance of the role of bees in pollination. Wild blueberries grow as a patchwork of individual self-sterile clones. Insects, and particularly bees, are needed in large numbers to transfer pollen from one clone to another in order for the crop to set. However, populations of native bees (various Os-mia species and bumblebees) are too low in large cultivated clearings or fields to ensure effective pollination. As one of the largest growers put it to me, without additional bees there would be few blueberries and no blueberry business. Some growers have turned to alfalfa leafcutter bees (Megachile rotundata) to meet their pollination needs, as they can be obtained as a by-product of commercial production of alfalfa seed and are easily handled. Most growers, however, rely on honey bees as they can be obtained in the vast numbers at the right time. Honey bees have a tendency to bite through the base of the petals to get at nectaries, thus effectively robbing the flower without pollinating it. Bumblebees then use the holes made by honey bees, thus adding to the nectar larceny. Research in the UK with Osmia rufa has shown that mason bees always make legitimate, pollinating visits to blueberry flowers and current work by USDA scientists shows that the Blue Orchard Bee, Osmia lignaria and at least one other Osmia sp. are effective pollinators of blueberries.

Growers in Maine are able to hire in honey bees from migratory beekeepers. One of the largest growers hired about 35,000 hives in this year’s (2007) season. The total number of colonies brought into the area annually is probably about twice that number. I spoke to one beekeeper who had brought 4,000 hives from California where they had been used to pollinate almonds - a trip of several thousand miles. Others had come from all over the continental USA, based as far afield as Florida, and North and South Dakota. The operations of these migratory beekeepers are fascinating, but too large a subject for this article. However, Following the Bloom: Across America with the Migratory Beekeepers by Douglas Whynott (Beacon Press, Boston Mass., 1991) gives a comprehensive and very readable account.
Some blueberry growers have developed pollination contracts with beekeepers which reward quality by offering a premium price. Under a typical contract a sample of 3% of hives would be assessed by an independent inspector to determine the price paid, which in 2007 was up to US$90.00 per hive. The grower agrees to meet the beekeeper’s lorries and assist in setting the hives out in the fields. Hives are set out in groups of about 40 - 80. Protection is given against bears, and the cost of any bear damage is shared. Such contracts are attractive: most beekeepers supply hives with 10 or more frames of brood and bees and achieve the top price. Bees are therefore a major expense to blueberry growers, but they are prepared to pay for an improved yield. Some growers supply fields with about 5 colonies of bees per acre (approximately 12 per hectare) as soon as they come into bloom. Such high densities are thought necessary as weather conditions are highly variable at flowering time and the bees may only be able to fly for a short period. Hives may be moved to other fields as soon as the crop is set. Some hives are also loaded onto trailers that are moved form place to place during the flowering period when a ‘top up’ supply of bees is needed. The density of hives may therefore locally exceed 5 per acre. It is thought that densities of up to 10 hives per acre (50 per hectare) may be cost effective in some areas.

However, as bees cannot be freely moved into or out of Nova Scotia, blueberry growers there cannot use the services of migratory beekeepers. The largest commercial grower in the area has therefore developed its own beekeeping subsidiary that operates up to 10,000 colonies - almost entirely for blueberry pollination. Even so this company hires about 7,000 additional hives from local commercial beekeepers.

The company’s hives are kept in the Annapolis Valley area, where the climate is milder than the blueberry growing areas and spring usually comes earlier. Nevertheless, winters in the Annapolis Valley can be harsh, and so the hives are over-wintered in large barns provided with temperature and ventilation controls. In spring the hives are set out in bee yards to build up strength. Local apple growers who benefit from the pollination of their orchards provide many yards. As soon as the blueberries come into flower the hives must be moved to the fields. To facilitate rapid and safe handling an ingenious but simple pallet system has been developed. Four hives are kept on each purpose-made pallet, covered by a roof that is clamped in place. Pallet loads interlock when stacked. The hives thus form stable, easy to handle loads and are resistant to bear damage. Just before being sent out to the fields most hives are brought back to a central yard, checked and stacked ready for transport. In an operation carried out with almost military precision I saw over 800 hives loaded onto two semi-trailers at dusk, taking just twenty minutes per load. A further two loads were being moved later that night. All were transported 150 miles to the blueberry fields, unloaded, and set out before dawn. The entire pollinating force of almost 8,000 colonies would be moved over the course of 5 nights. All the items of equipment and procedures are standardised to maximise efficiency. The scale and efficiency of the operation is immensely impressive and many commercial beekeepers could learn lessons from it.

Thousands of people are employed in blueberry production and processing in Maine and Nova Scotia. Many of those fortunate enough to own blueberry land have benefited from improved production and expanded markets. Pollination fees make a substantial contribution to beekeepers’ incomes.
Blueberries are a delicious and healthy food. There are also spin-off benefits for the growers of apples and other crops. The pollination of blueberries in Maine and Nova Scotia is therefore an excellent example of how bees and beekeeping can be essential to economies and enhance quality of life.

Migratory and large-scale beekeeping for pollination purposes has implications for the spread of bee diseases, but growers and commercial beekeepers are at the forefront of finding solutions and developing improved and more efficient beekeeping practices, in order to preserve their businesses.

From what I saw I have no doubt that migratory and commercial beekeepers will work together with researchers to discover the causes of colony collapse disorder (CCD) and will develop strategies to overcome its effects and those of other pests and diseases.

Andrew Poulter

Help support IBRA

*Buzz Extra available as a pdf*

Currently *Buzz Extra* is free to members as a “colour supplement” in our prestigious *Journal of Apicultural Research*. We aim to make it self-sufficient and to do so we need to interest a broader spectrum of readers. Therefore, we offer it as a freestanding newsletter to those who wish to support IBRA.

Please help us increase our Associate Membership. Anyone can receive *Buzz Extra* quarterly by sending £10 or US$20 or €15 per year. Please encourage would-be supporters to send their subscriptions along with their name, address and email along with their preference for pdf or hardcopy.

Special deals are available for Beekeeping Associations and Bee Clubs. Any number of copies of *Buzz Extra* can be delivered to one address at a special price. Please contact us for details of these great savings.

**www.everyclick.com**

IBRA is now one of the charities listed on the everyclick website.

The 25 keen members that now use everyclick have earned over £50 for the Association and at no cost to themselves. Please add your name and give it a try - it doesn't cost you a penny!

All you have to do is choose IBRA when you first visit the site, make everyclick your home page and then use it whenever you search the web or shop online.
Alfred Neighbour (1825-1890) is best remembered as a member of the firm of George Neighbour and Sons, of High Holborn and Regent Street, London who ran a major beekeeping appliance manufactory and dealership. George Neighbour (1784-1865), Alfred’s father, founded the firm around 1817 that was subsequently known as George Neighbour and Sons, grocers. It specialized in what would today be known as the delicatessen trade. A trade that originated in the 18th century when a number of Italians resident in London commenced importing food products from the Mediterranean into what were called Italian Warehouses. Their range of goods was diverse including edible and lamp oils. So some were called “oilmens” as was George Neighbour.

After leaving school Alfred joined his father and older brothers George Lynes (1819-1879) and Henry (1822-1895) in the family business taking a particular interest in the beekeeping department established by his father as early as 1824 when George took up the main agency for the Nutt Collateral Hive and, years later, the moveable frame Woodbury Hive.

The Neighbours developed their beekeeping interests in the years before the advent of the moveable comb hives producing a range of sophisticated skeps including ones with side observatory windows and superimposed glass bell jars to hold comb honey. These were shown at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, London in 1851 and at a range of major events thereafter in Great Britain, Europe and the USA.

Alfred organised, in 1860, the translation and publication by his firm of H. C. Hermann’s The Italian alp-bee, with the subsidiary title of “or the gold mine of husbandry; Short and practical instructions to breed genuine prolific Italian queens; to multiply them by the hundreds in a few months and how to change German hives (colonies? Ed.) into Italian.”

In 1865, the year of George senior’s death, Alfred in co-operation with Messer’s Kent and Co, Paternoster Row, London, published the first (134 page) edition The Apiary or Bees Bee-hives and Bee Culture, this was in effect a very up market catalogue that included “Testimonials of the press”. In the following year the second edition with 274 pages followed with a hand coloured frontispiece showing the Italian queen, drone and worker bees. In the preface to this book Alfred referred to his receipt of the Rev. L. L. Langstroth’s “volume” However, the main emphasis in the practical section of the book was on skeps and hives using top bars.

In 1878 Alfred, with the co-operation of Alfred Watts who was revising 1880 edition of Henry Taylor’s Bee-Keeper’s Manual, produced the enlarged and revised third edition that now had 359 pages. In addition to the hand coloured plate of the Italian bees a coloured lithograph of George Neighbour and Sons’ apiary at West End Hampstead formed the pull out frontispiece. In this third edition there were many references to skeps but it is clear that modern framed hives were coming to the fore. The work of Abbott, Cowan, and other British beekeepers was mentioned. The index included references to Langstroth and to Dr Dzierzon and Baron von Berlepsch in Europe.

Col. Walker purchased Alfred’s extensive library of bee books and this was in turn purchased in 1928 by the Walker Library of the University of Wisconsin for incorporation on its CC Miller Memorial Library.

My more detailed study of George Neighbour and Sons is due to appear later this year in the English Journal Bee Craft.
Apicultural Research on Varroa - Original research on bees and beekeeping in the 21st Century

Guest Editor - Stephen J Martin, Series Editor - Sarah L Jones, published by IBRA, 171 pages fully illustrated in colour through-out, soft back, £12.50 plus postage.

IBRA prides itself in providing tried and tested information - scientific fact not fiction - as every article used in this book has undergone rigorous peer review before publication as the material used is taken from IBRA’s learned journals. This new book will help to make important information available to a far wider readership.

The bee population is under tremendous pressure from a number of different sources not least the spread and development of diseases that seem to follow in the wake of Varroa. Beekeepers today need to be better informed than at any other time in the history of the craft – this book will put the facts before them.

The IBRA Museum – Skeps, tools and accessories.

Part II of the planned themed series from the IBRA Historical Collection. Series Editor Sarah L Jones. Seventy detailed illustrations with informative text. Published on CD ROM. £8.00 plus postage.

To many this may not seem to be the most enthralling of subject areas! However, it is an incredibly important part of beekeeping history and tradition, and this virtual tour will prove both fascinating and informative.

This CD is intended to give the viewer a brief history of skeps and then look at how they were made, used and modified before the wooden box hive made them redundant. It also gives a brief insight into how the skep became a symbol of hard work and industriousness.

AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

&

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