



Eva Crane Trust

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XVI INTERNATIONAL BEEKEEPING CONGRESS, VIENNA

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I concluded my report* on the last International Beekeeping Congress with the words 'The President and his Committee . . . have set many new standards, which will not easily be surpassed by those organizing future Congresses'. However it seemed to me that most of them *were* surpassed at the XVI Congress, and the support given to a suggestion that the next Congress should also be held in Vienna showed that many others shared this view.

THE CONGRESS MEMBERS

Every Congress since the war has been bigger than the last : Amsterdam 280, Leamington 300, Copenhagen 500 — and now Vienna 750. Thirty-five countries were represented compared with twenty in Copenhagen, and Vienna's traditional position as the gateway between East and West made it possible for a number to come from Eastern European countries, and some from Asia. Meeting old friends and making new ones is surely one of the greatest rewards of attending any International Congress, and we were rewarded very richly in this respect in Vienna.

France had the largest representation (123), with Britain (101) a close second. There were very few from Spanish-speaking countries, and none from New Zealand or Canada ; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Jones set out from Quebec, and it is very sad to record that Mr. Jones died in Athens on his way to the Congress. Another tragedy was the death on 14th August of Mr. F. Hölzl from Amstetten in Lower Austria.

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS AT SCHÖNBRUNN

Special two-day meetings of scientists had been held after the 1951 and 1954 Congresses ; they were chiefly informal discussions of current work and problems. This time the scientific meetings preceded the Congress, and were held in the *Höhere Bundeslehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Gartenbau* at Schönbrunn on August 10th and 11th. These were brilliantly fine and hot days, and the lunch-time walk through the gardens of Schönbrunn Palace gave many of us our first glimpse of the splendour of the former Imperial Court of Austria.

The meetings were more formal than the others had been ; papers

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were read (those attending the meetings were provided with printed summaries) and subsequently discussed. The summaries are published in *Apicultural Abstracts* 232-260/56 (October *Bee World*). There were four sessions : Genetics and bee breeding, Bee botany, Honey enzymes and Bee poisoning.

The session on *Bee breeding* made it clear how much attention is now being paid to this subject. Papers from the United States dealt chiefly with heterosis, hybrid vigour and high honey yields (and in contrast the low viability produced by inbreeding) ; those from European countries were concerned with characteristics of different races and their hybrids, and with fundamental work on the multiple mating of queens. Much light has been thrown on this subject recently, and many of our current ideas (and beekeeping practices based on them) must be revised. It seems likely for instance [A.A. 236/56] that the 'mating sign' shows not simply that the queen has mated, but that she has returned to the hive because she could not remove the mating sign in flight ; she is likely to fly off for further mating.

One of the papers in the session on *Bee botany* [A.A. 243/56] described experiments which have now been done in Poland to find the pollen content of honeys produced entirely from one plant species (small colonies were caged in an area containing only the one plant). These and similar experiments should be most valuable in estimating the validity of results obtained by pollen analysis of honey.

The session on *Honey enzymes* [A.A. 258, 259/56] was a lively one. It dealt with the estimation of diastase activity, which is used in West Germany—the world's largest honey-importing country—for determining the quality of honey imported from the U.S.A.—the world's largest honey-exporting country. The presence of Mr. R. B. Willson (a honey exporter), and of various European honey chemists, led to a very vigorous discussion. After the meeting, the whole company sampled some twenty or thirty Austrian and North American honeys.

The papers read at the remaining session, on *Bee poisoning* by insecticides, etc., gave the impression that the 'panic' stage of this hazard to beekeeping is over. Thanks to the legislation introduced in certain countries where the problem was most severe, to a better understanding of both sides of the problem, and to the development of insecticides such as toxaphene which are relatively harmless to bees, there is much less bee poisoning than a few years ago. Some danger still remains, however, but the advances which have been made in the detection of poisonous substances in bees, and the increased measure of co-operation and understanding between beekeepers and those using chemicals for plant protection, offer good hope for the future.

One advantage of holding these scientific meetings *before* the Congress was that a general report on each session could be given to the Congress. However one problem which must be considered before the next Congress is the relative value of formal meetings with set papers and discussions — relating in general to work already completed — and the original informal type of meeting, more closely related to current work and its problems. Except that attendance at these Scientific Meetings was restricted, and that the standard of the papers read tended to be higher, there was no difference between these sessions and the Specialist Sessions of the Congress itself.

THE CONGRESS OPENS

The first full-scale meeting of the Congress was at a cocktail party in the Pallavicini Palace on Sunday evening. Here — in a suite of rooms so elegant that we felt time had stood still since the imperial prosperity of Vienna was at its height — we greeted our friends from previous Congresses, and here already we knew that this Congress would be a good one.

The official opening took place the next morning in another magnificent hall, in the *Rathaus* — the town hall of Vienna. Professor E. Planckh, the President of the Congress, gave a resounding speech of welcome, and then presented the Weippl medal to Professor O. Morgenthaler the General Secretary of Apimondia, and to the Presidents of the last three Congresses : L. R. J. Ridder van Rappard, Amsterdam 1949 ; Dr. R. H. Barnes, Leamington 1952 ; Mr. B. Schwartz-Hansen, Copenhagen 1954.

LECTURES

The suggestion made in the *Bee World* report of the Copenhagen Congress, that some sessions should consist of longer lectures of general interest instead of short specialist reports, was adopted. Four mornings were devoted to twelve of these general lectures, which are listed in A.A. 261/56. They were very much appreciated, and could be followed by all. The simultaneous translating system used was of immense benefit to all but the best linguists ; earphones were attached to each chair, and each member could manipulate a switch so that he heard the lecture in English, French or German as he chose.

In the afternoons two Specialist Sessions ran concurrently, in the University nearby ; the 66 papers read are also listed in A.A. 261/56, and they will be abstracted in due course ; there are too many to be covered in this report. It is hoped that the full texts of all the lectures and papers will be available from the Bee Research Association Library.

We were greatly indebted to those who translated at these sessions — the professional translators from the morning sessions, and those members of the Congress who helped, notably Mr. M. Alber from Sicily, who could translate into no fewer than twenty-two languages.

VIENNA AND GRINZING

The coach tour of the city on Tuesday afternoon gave all members a chance to see Schönbrunn Palace — the 'Versailles of Vienna' — the (grey) Danube and the Prater, and many other points of interest. And by dividing the coaches according to language, everyone had a guide available whom he could understand. This tour ended in the evening at a *Heuriger* in Grinzing, where the festivities were unfortunately cut short by a sudden storm. (*Heurige* is the name given to the season's wine, and in Grinzing and other suburbs of Vienna where the vines grow, the new wine can be bought at any house where there is a green branch or wreath hung outside the door.)

Grinzing is also the home of the *Bundeslehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Bienenkunde*, which members visited in small parties throughout the Congress. Here we found an epitome of Austrian beekeeping, and Dr. Jordan and his staff explained to us most clearly the various Austrian hives and methods of management, and the research and teaching work which is being done at the Institute. The spotless condition of every room and piece

of equipment gave no indication of the extent of the rehabilitation which was necessary after the war.

No one can foretell how or what his reaction will be to a foreign city when he first visits it, and many of us were strangers to Vienna before the Congress. To some, exploring the rich history of the city proved a great delight, and music-lovers fulfilled a long-standing ambition in listening to the concerts there. But to others the city seemed too hot and stifling after days spent in the Alps, and some of those with long memories found too much to regret to be really happy in present-day Vienna. For myself, however, I can only say that my contact with the city and its people was an unequivocal pleasure.

MELK AND THE WACHAU

The full-day excursion, which has become an established part of the Congresses and is not necessarily concerned with beekeeping, took place on Thursday. At 7.30 a.m. we found seats in the array of coaches outside the Town Hall, and the convoy set off for Melk, a town on the Danube some 60 miles west of Vienna. Police outriders supervised the passage of the half-mile-long 'serpent' of coaches through each village.

Melk is an ancient town, with a monastery founded in 1089. The present monastery was built between 1702 and 1736, and is one of the finest baroque buildings in the world; this was our objective in visiting Melk. To those who appreciated the baroque style, the tour of the monastery was a marvellous experience, and none could fail to be impressed by this magnificent building which — in the choice of its site, its conception, and its uniformity of style — exemplifies the baroque at its best.

Each of us carried away some special memory from Melk: the courtyard of the monastery, where the Congress members were joined by girls in their Wachau dress; the views over the roofs of the town and over the river; the Library and its thousands of volumes bound to match the decoration of the room itself; or the chapel thronged with people listening to the organ. We understood there why it has been said that Gothic architecture draws the spirit of the worshipper up from earth to heaven, but that the baroque brings heaven down to earth.

From Melk we sailed down the Danube on a specially chartered boat, through the Wachau to Dürnstein. The Wachau is a beautiful stretch of the Danube valley, where the river separates the foothills of the Alps from the granite plateau of Bohemia. The winding river, and the vine-clad hillsides, are very reminiscent of the Rhine between Mainz and Koblenz. There is however one difference between the two rivers now: whereas the Rhine is busy with shipping, the Danube is virtually empty — the Iron Curtain crosses the Danube below Vienna, and the use of the river as an international waterway has ceased.

Dürnstein is perhaps the most attractive of all the Wachau villages, and it seemed that the whole population was waiting on the quayside to welcome us. After a greeting of two salvos, the band played us ashore. One of my most vivid memories is of the bright sunshine playing on the crowd, and on the bandsmen and the girls who were later to sing to us — both men and girls in Wachau dress. In the background was the beautiful baroque church, and the hilltop crowned with the ruins of the castle where

Richard Coeur-de-Lion was imprisoned in 1193, and was found by his faithful minstrel Blondel.

We spent a happy two or three hours in Dürnstein, watching the river flow by and drinking the local wine, talking to the villagers and to other beekeepers, visiting the church and monastery, or walking through the sun-drenched vineyards to the wine cellars of the *Winzergenossenschaft Wachau*.

From Dürnstein we continued downstream to Krems, a town which still retains its mediaeval walls. We left the ship here, and after exploring the town and dining (and according to accounts of different Congress members encountering various adventures), the serpent of coaches took us back to Vienna.

EDITORS' MEETING

Editors of beekeeping journals met together as a body for the first time at the Copenhagen Congress in 1954, and the Editors' Meeting has now become an integral part of the Congress. The second meeting, in Vienna on Friday afternoon, was able to welcome many Editors who had not been at Copenhagen. Discussions were held on various subjects of mutual interest, including the difficult questions of copyright, and of generally acceptable procedures for reprinting material from one journal in another; complete agreement was finally reached.

APIMONDIA

The meeting of Apimondia was held on Saturday afternoon. As in Copenhagen, the business was completed smoothly and without incident; this in itself indicates the advance in international understanding which has taken place since 'Apimondia' was first launched in 1949.

The minutes of the 1954 meeting were distributed in the first number of the bulletin *Apimondia*, printed in English, French and German editions. Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Luxemburg were then welcomed as new member countries.

Professor O. Morgenthaler, the General Secretary, reported on his work for the past two years. It had been difficult for two reasons. Firstly, not nearly enough money had been available; up to August 1956 only Austria, Canada, England, Luxemburg, Scotland and the U.S.A. had paid their subscriptions (£10 due from each country). Secondly, the unanimous decision at the 1954 meeting to dissolve the Executive Committee had left the Secretary with too much responsibility, and with no competent body to which he could go for discussion and advice.

The choice of a few Committee members to represent so many countries is essentially difficult, and Dr. Morgenthaler suggested that the Presidents of the four post-war Congresses should be accepted as a Consultative Committee (Dr. R. H. Barnes, Prof. E. Planckh, L. R. J. Ridder van Rappard, Mr. B. Schwartz-Hansen). The meeting agreed to this, but added Dr. Morgenthaler's own name to the other four, so that he would still be on the Committee after he had retired from the Secretaryship. He was firm in his decision to do this, and the name of Dr. A. Zappi-Recordati (Italy) was put forward as his successor. This had the full approval of the meeting, and Dr. Zappi-Recordati was accordingly elected General Secretary of Apimondia.

The date and place of the next Congress were not so easily settled, and the representatives of the member countries were called out to vote;

Austria	Prof. E. Planckh	Italy	Conte Dr. A.
Belgium	Senateur E. Leysen		Zappi-Recordati
Canada	absent	Luxemburg	J. Poos
Czechoslovakia	Dr. J. Svoboda	Netherlands	L. R. J. Ridder
Denmark	B. Schwarz-Hansen (for H. M. Schøtt)	Norway	van Rappard R. Lunder
Egypt	Dr. A. K. Wafa	Scotland	A. Limond (for Dr. J. N. Tennent)
England	L. E. Snelgrove (for Dr. R. H. Barnes)	Spain	absent
Finland	Miss K. Kuurma	Sweden	Dr. A. Hansson
France	C. Bourchardeau	Switzerland	Dr. M. Hunkeler
Germany (D.B.R.)	L. Birklein	U.S.A.	J. I. Hambleton
Hungary	Dr. Z. Örösi-Pál	U.S.S.R.	Prof. G. F. Taranov
		Yugoslavia	T. Jevtič

The date of the next Congress was violently debated. A large and vocal part of the assembly was determined that the next Congress should be held in 1958, whereas the scientists were in favour of a longer interval, since they had neither time nor money to attend a Beekeeping Congress every two years. The actual voting was almost equally divided, the two-year interval being passed by one vote. The choice of venue lay between Rome and Brussels, Rome being the final choice. The next Congress will therefore be held in Rome in 1958 (September or October). It is interesting to note how Italy has now come to the forefront of international beekeeping.

THE LADIES

The recent development of the separate Ladies' [i.e., non-beekeepers'] Programme has made these Congresses popular among friends and relations of members who are not interested in bees. In Vienna the 'Ladies' went on a number of sightseeing tours in Vienna itself and in the surrounding hills, as well as taking part in the social events of the Congress, and the excursion to Melk and the Wachau. Shopping, which figured several times in the Ladies' Programme, was of course not confined to them, and all of us found some momento to take home. But those who were not 'Ladies' found it difficult to do much more than window shopping, because the shops were so often closed when we tried to visit them.

THE BEEKEEPING EXHIBITION

The exhibition of beekeeping, which was held in the *Volkshalle* of the Town Hall from 12th to 19th August, deserves very high praise indeed. Both conception and execution of this exhibition were excellent. There were separate exhibits devoted to special themes, and set up by different people, but these exhibits were so skilfully arranged that they gave the impression of a single large exhibition. We congratulate Mr. Fiebiger, Ing. Nussbaumer, Mr. Richter and their colleagues on their work.

The exhibition was entitled *Oesterreich ein Bienenland*, and colour-

ful posters advertising it were to be found all over Vienna. The public came in large numbers, and were taken round in groups by guides who were members of the local Beekeepers' Association. (I should like here to express my own personal thanks to all the Congress guides for doing their tiring work with such unfailing good humour. Wherever I went in the Town Hall or the University, and at whatever time, these men and women were on duty, welcoming, smiling and able to direct me where I wanted to go).

Some of the exhibits were historical; there were documents dating from the ninth century sealed with seals of beeswax, and the original patent issued by the Empress Maria Theresa in 1775 for the institution of beekeeping schools. There was a seventeenth century *Metstube* — a mead-drinking parlour — completely furnished, and with mead and the traditional heart-shaped *Lebkuchen*. Other exhibits portrayed the various aspects of Austrian beekeeping, and the varieties of Austrian honey and of the flora from which it comes. There was a special exhibit of books from Austria and forty other countries, and there were exhibits from the Beekeeping Associations of neighbouring countries: Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. Finally, the photographs entered for competition were displayed to great advantage at different places in the hall. The first prize was won by J. G. Tanner (Scotland) for his photograph of a honeybee on a marrow flower.

Two outstanding new illustrated books were on view for the first time: *Die Welt der Biene* by Harald Doering and Erich Hornsmann, with eighty-four superb full-page photographs, and *Bienenkundliche Lehrtafeln*, with twenty-one clear coloured plates showing the activities and the anatomy of honeybees; the plates were drawn by H. Zecha, and the text is by R. Jordan.

At various times during the Congress films were shown. They included a Swedish film on automatic honey bottling, an excellent Finnish bee film, and film strips by R. Jordan (Vienna) on queen rearing and swarm management.

THE BANQUET

The banquet, held on Saturday evening, was the last official gathering of the Congress. It was to have been held in the beautiful baroque Auersperg Palace, but it proved necessary in the end to use instead the *Liesinger Stadtkeller*. The layout of this restaurant was such that the Congress was split up into a number of groups; as a result of this division, and the poor acoustics which prevented most people from hearing the speeches and announcements, the gathering had little cohesion. The heat there was quite overpowering, and most members left early after hurried goodbyes to their friends.

CONCLUSION

Some members followed up the Congress by a five-day coach tour through Austria. Others travelled independently into neighbouring countries — east or west of the Iron Curtain as their passports permitted.

We were all sorry to leave Vienna, where for a week or more we had felt ourselves to be an integral part of the life of the city. We had been surrounded by the friendship and kindness of beekeepers from all Austria, and they had taught us the truth of their Congress motto *Oesterreich ein Bienenland*. Whether they realized it or not I do not know, but their very welcome made one thing certain: one day we shall come back.