In December 1993 beekeepers from Benin, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and The Gambia joined Ghanaians for the second in this series of West African meetings. That the Seminar took place at all was a triumph for the members of Ghana Beekeepers Association who organised it without government support: friends in The Netherlands provided funding for printing publicity information, and a last minute appeal to IFS in Sweden brought essential funding to enable the Seminar to go ahead.

Over 100 government personnel, local chiefs and other dignitaries attended the opening ceremony, held in the shade of the majestic trees of Aburi Botanic Gardens. After the dancing and speeches ended the 56 Seminar Participants got down to beekeeping debate, which took place in English and French languages. Although the title of the Seminar mentions bee research, few of the participants are employed as bee researchers, although many, like beekeepers everywhere, are keen to test and try new methods. The Seminar's subtitle, Beekeeping development in West Africa provides a more accurate description of the type of discussion.

The 28 papers that were presented generated plenty of lively discussion, particularly concerning the continuing debate between those keen on top-bar hives and those who favour frame hives. There have been quite a few beekeeping projects in Ghana, and they have enjoyed varying levels of success. There was criticism of those projects which simply 'dump hives' without providing sufficient technical support to new beekeepers. Another point concerned the selection of beneficiaries for beekeeping projects: it seems that too often not enough care is taken to ensure that those who are given hives are people who have a real desire to work with bees.

Some of the problems faced by beekeepers in West Africa are common to beekeepers everywhere: lack of understanding by governments and by the general public of the importance and value of bees. In Ghana it seems that as more and more of the large trees are felled and native habitat is destroyed, bees are short of nesting sites and resort to nesting in houses and other man-made constructions. Bees are therefore increasingly perceived as a nuisance. There are even commercial bee killers who are paid to destroy colonies using insecticides.

The only answer is to do, as beekeepers in Ghana and West Africa are doing, to organise themselves and to lobby on behalf of the bees. Meetings such as these do much to focus attention on the value of bees, and the Ghana Beekeepers Association deserve congratulation for achieving it!

Beekeepers in Ghana have good experience of the native honeybee, *Apis mellifera adansonii* and can obtain worthwhile honey yields from colonies of this bee. But nobody can really claim to have found a way to manage it. Indeed Stephen Adjare, one of the most skilled and experienced beekeepers in Ghana, titled his paper 'Queen rearing in Ghana - an unworkable proposition'.

**Exhibition**

An exhibition displayed honey collected from different regions of Ghana, some of the commodities which can be made with Ghanaian honey and wax, locally made beekeeping clothing, and various items of equipment. It is very useful to have this kind of display at meetings: inevitably some non-beekeepers turn up to find out more, and it is very useful to have equipment such as smokers and hives, and products of beekeeping, to explain the processes involved.

**WABA turns into BAWA**

During the week there was more discussion about the regional grouping for West African beekeepers, formed two years ago at the first of these Seminars held in The Gambia. The Constitution was discussed, and various decisions taken, including a change of title: the new name is the Beekeepers Association of West Africa, or BAWA.
Termite ants cause great problems for West African beekeepers. Termites do not bother the bees, they simply eat their hives! Although there are some hard woods which offer resistance, these are very expensive. Beekeepers have to be vigilant: wooden hives on wooden stands are at great risk from termites and ideally should be visited daily to sweep away any termite earth channels.

Siaka Manga, from The Gambia, caused quite a stir at the Seminar by relating his method for preventing termite damage. The method involves the use of salt: watch this space for further details!

Wawa wood (Triplochiton scleroxylon) is widely available in Ghana, and wawa boards are relatively cheap. However the wood is soft and readily attacked by termites. Kwame Aidoo has found that by brushing the boards with molten beeswax they can be rendered termite proof.

Stingless bees
Brother Anthony Addai is a Franciscan friar who is President of The Ghana Beekeepers Association. He has made some extremely valuable and interesting observations of stingless bees in Ghana. He has recognised 6 different species of stingless bees in Ghana, one of which seems at least as prolific a honey producer as Apis mellifera adansonii. Perhaps it is with these species that the future of beekeeping in West Africa lies? Honey from stingless bees is highly valued by Ghanaians for its medicinal properties.

Next Seminar
The third in this series of Seminars will take place in Benin, in 1995.

Nicola Bradbear attended the Second West African Bee Research Seminar with funding from the Overseas Development Administration, UK. The Proceedings of the First Seminar are now available: see page 14.

EAST AFRICA
ARUSHA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE, TANZANIA
In October Arusha beekeepers held their first Conference, which attracted around 100 people from all walks of life, but with a shared interest in bees: mostly local beekeepers and farmers but also from Ghana, Uganda and Zanzibar.

The wide range of participants required simultaneous translation between English, Kiswahili and Kimasai.

A total of 35 papers were presented, covering low cost methods of small-scale processing of honey, 'apiagroforestry', the role of NGOs in beekeeping development and appropriate beekeeping equipment.

According to our correspondent Matthew Kawa:

The meet was very rich in beekeeping information. The experts learnt a lot from the local experts (traditional beekeepers) and they were equally pollinated by the paper presentations, the video shows, posters, photo exhibition, corridor and tea chats!

This meeting took place largely as a result of the efforts of Mr A Y Kimishua, Co-ordinator of Arusha Beekeepers Association, and he and his team also deserve congratulation for the successful meeting they have brought about.

Session in full swing. Masai ladies listen attentively.

Tanzanian and Ugandan delegates meet outside the Conference venue.