

The worker bee syndrome seemed to sum up the life of *Moira McGuigan's* patient, as she describes in

# *Apis mel* a constitutional remedy



Illustration by Jim Opler

**B**eth, a young woman of 27, came to see me suffering from urticaria and angioedema. Urticaria is hives raised on the skin and angioedema is swelling of the lips, face and tongue that can be very dangerous. She worked in the mortgage section of a bank and had suffered this problem since 1999, shortly after getting a puppy. She had thought the dog was to blame but when he died a few months later her condition did not improve.

She had recurring rashes over the next seven months and then her face, lips, tongue and the glands in her throat began to swell regularly. Some days she was afraid to leave the house because of the extreme swelling. Shortly after, her grandmother died and her symptoms got worse.

Beth's GP had given her anti-histamines that she was presently taking three times a day but when she had had a really bad attack of facial swelling her GP was quite worried and had given her steroids to take. Beth had had referrals to an allergy specialist, a dermatologist, nutritionist and a rheumatologist with no result.

Beth finally came in to see me for help. Her rash was extremely itchy, appearing as raised sore, red lumps which were on her hands, arms legs, trunk and soles of the feet. It felt as if she was walking on pebbles even though there were no blisters on her skin. The condition appeared to be worsening with increased swelling and inflammation of her wrists, hands and knees. The itch was very intense even worse than the heat of the rash. The only relief was a warm bath with baking soda in the water.

Beth said, "Physically, I don't have a lot of other symptoms except that I pass a

lot of urine but I suppose that is because I drink a lot. I also get a lot of catarrh first thing in the morning but I haven't had a cold since 1999. When my skin flares up, I get depressed and want to hide away."

There wasn't anything in Beth's past history to alert me. She had had a happy childhood with two brothers and one younger sister. Her father was away a lot and her mother worked part-time. She liked primary school but was anxious to leave secondary school. When Beth left school, she got work in a bank, staying there for 11 years. I felt that this was unusual, people usually move around more these days.

Beth told me that she liked the people she worked with but the work was boring. There had been some trouble at work last year when she'd covered for the team leader. An older, male colleague resented her new position and was always criticising her. Recently, there had been rumours that the department was to be closed down. Everyone was hanging on for a redundancy cheque. Beth had her own plans if she got redundancy but would probably stay in the same kind of work.

Recent family events in Beth's life had been her grandmother and grandfather dying and her father suffering a heart attack. Both worried her greatly and the skin conditions worsened. She lives at home with her parents and is very close to her sister's child, Stephanie, who is a huge joy and large part of her life.

"I have a great social life at work," Beth explained. "We get on well. I go to the gym three times a week and I like dancing but I don't get the opportunity to go very often

and I spend a lot of time with my niece and nephews."

Beth had no serious boyfriends since school and wanted to meet a man who was a hero just like her dad.

Next, I asked Beth about her likes and dislikes. She was a thirsty person drinking a lot of fizzy drinks and water. She likes spicy foods but not fish. She does not like insects or heights. She loves flying especially the take off and landing and looking over the

clouds. Then she said something strange: she didn't like having flowers around the house at all. I found this quite unusual. Beth said that she even hated the pattern of flowers on wallpapers.

The symptoms of Beth's case indicated many first aid remedies: *Urtica urens*, *Apis mel* and *Rhus tox* (if there is blistering) as well as *Calc carb*, *Phosphorus* and *Natrum mur*. However, I thought there were really strong strands running through this case. Work was extremely important to Beth. She has worked loyally for the same company all her adult life. Her team was a tightly knit group and she had worked together with them for many years. Her social life outside her family was always with her workmates. She liked harmony and stability at home and work. If things were unhappy, she was distressed.

She was very conscientious and she'd worked solidly over the years making way up the

promotion ladder slowly and plodding on. Although she was young and heterosexual, she didn't seem interested in having a relationship with a man. She was waiting for her dream man or her hero who was probably unobtainable. She enjoyed her relationship with children. She loved flying and hated flowers around the house because she would have to look after them.



Photo courtesy of British Beekeepers Association

Her problems of urticaria and angioedema had started with disharmony within her working team. Therefore I concentrated on *Apis* and thought of the structure of a beehive.

The beehive is the epitome of a harmonious working relationship. Only the queen bee is sexual. The worker bees work for the good of the hive and protect and serve the queen by collecting nectar and pollen from plants and bringing it back to the queen. Some workers use it to make honey, others tend the larvae and feed the grubs. Male drones have only one purpose,

to chase and catch the queen and impregnate her. Only the strongest and fastest drone is successful. All the queen does is lay eggs. There are no males working in this environment at all: it is asexual.

All of this may seem irrelevant to Beth's case but just look at some of the things she has said. "I hate flowers and the need to look after them. I love flying. I like my



niece, she is the joy of my life and I like my nephews too." She likes her niece the best but they are all like brothers and sisters. In the hive, everyone is related and involved in looking after the queen bee and each other. I gave her Apis 30c (three tablets).

She returned three months later. The rash lessened for about three weeks then she then heard that the mortgage department was closing down and her skin flared up and was worse than ever. Beth was told that she couldn't get redundancy, only redeployment.

"I feel overwhelmed and

that I have no control over my own life. They want me to move to another part of the bank. I've been in the mortgage department for a long time, have trained up and I feel that they should value my skills now and give me a job that matches my experience. If they can't do that, they should give me my redundancy. I'm thinking of taking this to a tribunal."

She told me that she'd had a strange dream. "There was some sort of war game. I was with a lot of people I knew. I dreamed about a beautiful, brand new house. We went into the house and hid in the attic. The next thing I knew, we were all sitting talking and laughing and getting on well together. It was a lovely



house and made of pale wood with a porch on the front just like one of those American clapboard houses. There were no other houses around it; it was just there, sitting alone by itself. I remember thinking what a lovely house this was."

I immediately thought of the beehive. Beth hadn't been aware of what remedy she was given so I told her. I gave her another three tablets of Apis. The rash disappeared. She returned later with the news that she had taken her employers to appeal and was now awaiting the result. She had been transferred to another bank in England for nine weeks.

"It was a big adventure for

me. I had to live away from home and we had to drive back for weekends. All three of us workmates went down. I was surprised because I wasn't carsick at all and it had been acute before. My skin has been great, the rashes and hives have gone. I've stopped the anti-histamines. For the first time in two years I got a cold last week. I thought it was strange.

"If I win my appeal at the bank they will have to offer me a higher grade job. If I lose, they will have to make me redundant. I already have a job to go to as I put my name into a job agency and the next day I went for tests. I feel my working life is changing.

"I also met a guy in a town pub. He is from Newcastle. We just hit it off straight away and chatted all night. We just talk all the time and get on well."

I left it at that and suggested if she has a flare up then contact me. Just to make sure, I phoned her recently. She said that her skin had been clear and she was still off anti-histamines. She lost her appeal at work and decided to take the new job with an insurance company but is finding it a slow process to settle into a new place. This is to be expected as Beth likes static, she likes what she knows.

I asked her if she was still seeing the man from Newcastle. She told me it was going quite well but he still has to prove himself! I just thought oh well, I hope he doesn't have to fly after her to prove himself!

The remedy Apis mel has so many indications for Beth and her character. Just with these six tablets Beth got better when conventional medicine had failed.



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MFHom was a  
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