

# Apis Regina, A Prover's Reflections

By Selina Humphries



Bee, *Apis mellifica*

What is it like on the inside of a proving? Through the diary of one queen bee prover, and her retrospective thoughts, we share some of the experience.

In 2001, I was a second-year student at Purton House School of Homeopathy. My fourth year tutor, Mary Piper, was carrying out a proving for her final project and was looking for provers. It was difficult finding the right people; provers needed to be fit and healthy, not taking any medication (allopathic or homeopathic), not related to either supervisors or coordinators, and prepared to devote their time to observation and recording themselves. Up to that point I had never quite got round to seeing a homeopath. This looked like the ideal opportunity; I was in theory an ideal prover and very excited at the thought of seeing a remedy from the inside, even though the remedy would not be revealed until two months later. My proving diary is included in this article, and represents my direct experience of being part of the queen bee energy. My reflections on the experience, at a distance of three years, follow the diary.

## Extracts From The Proving Diary

O/S old symptom, N/S new symptom, A/S altered symptom, R/S recent symptom. The journal was started two days before remedy given.

**Tuesday 27 November 2001:** Have had a bad cold since last Thursday – felt shivery, achy, hot, cold, and weak. Feeling better now but have wheezy cough with expectoration (clear) in morning, dry in evening. Nose alternately blocked and running. Sinuses on forehead feel blocked, heavy, achy feeling < leaning forward. Eyes feel bruised. Mouth and lips dry from breathing through mouth. Good state to be in to start a proving! Last cold was September 2000, so not bad going.

**Wednesday 28 November 2001:** Slept well, cough okay, didn't wake me up in the night. Nose still alternately blocked and running, clear, thin. Eating well though can't smell or taste much. Feel cold is getting better. College today, felt very tired pm, unusually so. Felt a bit down after college, don't know why. Remedy tomorrow...

**Proving day 0, Thursday 29 November 2001:** Slept really well, didn't cough at all. 9.15a.m. Took remedy. Nose clear, mucus very 'free' in chest also. Didn't cough much today. 3pm Took second tablet. Have much more energy than yesterday. Haven't got much appetite but when I do eat I'm hungry N/S. Fencing this evening, normally I come back exhausted but felt good tonight N/S. Sweated a lot, as normally do. 10.30pm Third remedy tablet. All other body functions as normal.

**Proving day 1, Friday 30 November 2001:** 8.30am. Took remedy. Cough and nose much better. Nose not blocked. Running a lot, clear mucus. Cough loose, feel this is normal progression of the cold. 2.30pm Took remedy. All seemingly normal. p.m. Eczema (OS) has come up on right palm, two itchy blister type spots A/S < heat. 11pm Eczema patch has got bigger, still itchy, red < heat. 12.30am Final remedy.

**Proving day 2, Saturday 1 December 2001:** Slept well, can't remember any dreams. Eczema on right hand is like tiny blisters filled with clear liquid. It is on either side of lifeline on palm. < after washing, weepy and itchy. Eczema gradually got less itchy through the day. Patch much drier and smaller, less 'angry' by evening. Haven't felt hungry (NS) but when I do eat I am hungry, do have an appetite. Seem to be drinking less generally (NS).

**Proving day 3, Sunday 2 December 2001:** Slept well, dreamt but don't remember it. Nose much clearer, cough much better, a bit chesty but loose. Eczema on hand itchy < heat in bed. Dry, red-looking tiny blisters. A bit weepy after washing. Better during the day. Not at all hungry or thirsty today (NS). I have eaten because it's mealtimes, and enjoyed it but I'm not hungry. Normally I want to eat and drink in between meals. Feel fine, energy good, feel positive. Have been busy all day. 5.00p.m. Eczema on right hand very itchy. Crusty and itchy. Weeping when scratched. Felt quite warm generally when I went to bed (NS), I'm normally chilly. Other body functions seem normal. Have noticed my mouth is sore after eating sweet things (NS). Feels as if burnt with a hot drink

**Proving day 3, Monday 3 December 2001:** Slept well, dreamt but don't remember it. Not hungry or thirsty this morning, but had breakfast anyway. Still have cough and not much sense of smell or taste. Could this be why I don't have much appetite? Eczema on hand dry and red, though not itchy. 11.00a.m. Eczema very itchy > good scratch. Dry, weepy, peeling a little. Not feeling 100% today, feel chesty, cough feels quite congestive.

Nose is blocked. Sinus type headache < over forehead when leaning forward. Today is a grey, cold, damp day, rather like I feel. Went for a short walk at 3pm to collect children from school, felt better when I came back, more energy. Did not feel hungry but wanted to eat (NS) ate loads of pizza with the children. Still have congestive headache < coughing on left side of head (normally have pain here when I have a headache) (OS). 7pm Headache better, though still < coughing. Have eaten loads this evening though I was not hungry (NS).

Lots of energy, felt very organised today, very productive, did lots

**Proving day 4, Tuesday 4 December 2001:** Slept well dreams but not remembered. Not hungry this morning. Eczema a bit better, flaky and dry. Not itchy, but still red. Cough is loose, nose a bit blocked and running. No headache. Feel more 'up' this morning, more energy. It is a sunny, damp day. Itchy spot has come up on my left cheek (NS). It looks like the ones that came up on my hand on proving day 1. Lots of energy, felt very organised today, very productive, did lots. Sunny weather helps. Eczema peeling on palm looks a bit spotty. 5pm Have not felt hungry, though went out for lunch and ate loads. Could have quite easily gone without anything.

**Proving day 5, Wednesday 5 December 2001:** Had a very vivid dream, woke me up in the night (1.30am). Dreamed I was selling cocaine. I kept spilling it, white powder on a white worktop, brushing it off with my fingers and licking it. (Possibly to do with television programmes I watched last night where cocaine was mentioned?) Felt good today, positive. Energy okay. Still not hungry or thirsty, though did not stop me eating a load of rubbish at college! Energy levels decreased throughout the day. Eczema on hand better, not itchy. Spot on cheek gone. Cough and nose congestion better today, no headache. Other stuff normal. Felt very tired this evening, around 8pm.

**Proving Day 6, Thursday 6 December 2001:** Slept well, no dreams. Energy felt okay, normal. Eczema on palm getting better, but on back of hands it is much worse. Very itchy, red and sore. Not spotty or weeping like the palm. This is how it normally is, red and itchy. This eczema on the backs of the hand is something that comes and goes, usually < stress. I don't think I am stressed. Feel a bit hungrier today than I have for the past few days. Physically energy seems normal. Mentally my mind is very active, been doing lots of planning and organising in my head (NS). Fencing this evening, came back exhausted as normal. Cough and nose much better. Burnt my left hand on the oven shelf, not very bad but sore.

**Proving day 7, Friday 7 December 2001:** Slept well, woke up really tired. Cough and cold much better. Eczema sore and red though not itchy. Appetite seems to be returning to normal. Mouth is not sore any more.

**Proving day 8, Saturday 8 December 2001:** Slept well, not quite so tired when I woke up. Played tennis for an hour. Had a headache after, probably because I did not drink enough. Energy good. Beautiful sunny, cold day. Eczema red and dry, a little better. Did not feel too hungry today, but ate quite a lot. The burn on my knuckle is sore.

**Proving day 9, Sunday 9 December 2001:** Woke up at 5am (NS), could not get back to sleep for an hour. Dreamed about toads. Kept seeing loads of them, camouflaged in the garden. Like an Escher picture, the more I looked the more I saw. I felt revolted. Energy good, competed in fencing tournament. Eczema very sore and red, on palm of right hand and the backs of both. Sore, tiny, weeping blisters < cold and washing. Two itchy, red spots have come up on the palm of left hand (NS). The burn on my knuckle looks red and is sore. What a mess! I have not felt hungry but have eaten loads today, more than normal (NS).

**Proving day 10, Monday 10 December 2001:** Woke at 5am (NS) again but quickly back to sleep. Not hungry or thirsty today. Have eaten, as I have been with people and food is expected. Eczema is very sore, red, a bit raw and dry. It feels a bit prickly (NS) < cold, washing. I seem to be thinking about it all the time; in fact I have done for the past three days (NS). Energy good and mood positive. Very cold day, foggy then bright.

**Proving day 11, Tuesday 11 December 2001:** Woke at 4.45am (NS) back to sleep quickly. Energy good today, very positive, did lots of things. Eczema very sore and dry. It is occupying my mind most of the time (NS). Have put soothing cream on, Bach Rescue, aloe vera. I am dying to slap on some Betnovate but I won't. Felt hungry midday, have not drunk much. 7pm Eczema feels very prickly and sore (NS), it makes

me feel irritable. My skin feels prickly on back and shoulders (NS). Felt irritable with the children between 7pm - 8pm (NS).

**Proving day 12, Wednesday 12 December 2001:** Slept well didn't wake early. Don't remember any dreams. Energy and mind positive and busy. Good. Eczema calm, not red or sore or itchy. No pricking sensations. Appetite good, ate lots. (Mostly mince pies at college!) Was not as preoccupied with thinking about my hands as I have been these past few days.

**Proving day 13, Thursday 13 December 2001:** Energy good, mood positive. Appetite increasing a little, it seems a bit more normal. Still not drinking as much as I was before the proving. Eczema red but not itchy. It is sore but not too bad. Not thinking about it quite so much.

**Proving day 14, Friday 14 December 2001:** Slept well, don't remember any dreams. Energy and mood good. Eczema feels calm though it is still very red and visible. Dry and peeling on palm. I have hardly thought about it today. Appetite is good, not much thirst.

**Proving day 15, Saturday 15 December 2001:** Energy good, played tennis am. Very bright, sunny and frosty. Felt brilliant after, lots of energy. Slight headache after tennis, drank lots of water and it went. Eczema calm, though still very red and flaky. Not on my mind at all. Period started today as expected. Appetite as yesterday, it seems to be a bit more normal now.

**Proving day 16, Sunday 16 December 2001:** I seemed to do masses of things this weekend. Practical things, finishing off jobs, decorating (NS). It has rubbed off on the rest of the family; everyone else is being industrious too! Mood good, energy very good. Eczema still calm, red and flaky. Not itchy. A few spots have appeared on the backs of my hands, they are not itchy (NS). Appetite good, thirsty today. Really fancy refreshing drink, bitter lemon (NS).

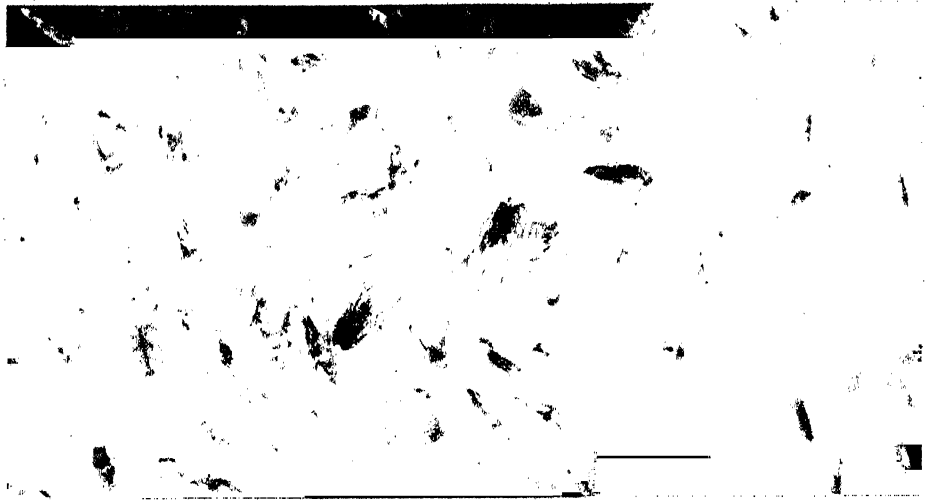
**Proving day 17, Monday 17 December 2001:** Woke up at 5am (NS), stayed awake for about half an hour. Restless, could not get comfortable, too hot, too cold (NS). Got up - energy and mood good. Did lots today, industrious again! Not much appetite, but thirsty. Got very hot while Christmas shopping. Eczema calm, red. Still have the little spots on the backs of my hands (NS). They seem to be in hair follicles.

**Proving day 18, Tuesday 18 December 2001:** Woke at normal time, 7am, from a very deep sleep. I didn't know what time or day it was. Energy good today, mood positive. Very industrious, busy day. Eczema calm, almost gone on the back of left hand, though still a few odd little spots. The patch on the right palm is quite smooth now. Still very red but not itchy. Not much appetite, though I have been thirsty. Desire coffee.

**Proving day 19, Wednesday 19 December 2001:** Woke at 5am (NS) but was able to get back to sleep quickly. Energy and mood good. Industrious morning. Had a shock this afternoon. My close friend telephoned, she has been diagnosed with a brain tumour and very poor prognosis. I can't believe it. Took *Aconituz* 30 then remembered the proving. Cried.

**June 2002:** For six days, every morning a small, brown worker bee has flown into my bedroom through the window.

**September 2004:** At the Society conference workshop 'Getting Published in the Journal' found out that the March issue is incorrect remedies. Feel I should write something about the *Apis Regina* proving. Received an email from a Purton House student doing his final project on the clinical use of *Apis Regina*. The bee is back.



Worker bees  
in a hive

*It seems as if my emotional state was taken over by a positive mental attitude and physically productive state: almost a tunnel vision to get things done*

**December 2004:** During the first week of December I had increased energy. Much more productive than usual, really organised. Prickly sensation on hands, eczema flared up, red spots. I recognised this as similar to symptoms while proving *Apis Regina* three years ago.

### Reflections

It is interesting looking back on the proving. At the time, a lot of the things that were going on seemed quite normal; they were subtle and merged in alongside my normal life. Looking back, I can see that I was in quite an altered state. It would have been interesting to do the proving at a different time (other than Christmas), to see if any of the hype of it affected my increased activity. I was also very 'up' and excited about the proving. I wonder if those who experienced similar symptoms had felt the same prior to the proving.

On an emotional level I was not aware of much change during the proving. For a short while my physical 'prickliness' was matched with a similar mental irritation, though this did not last long. It seems as if my emotional state was taken over by a positive mental attitude and physically productive state, almost a tunnel vision to get things done. Five months after the proving, looking back in my journal, I see that there was later a polarity of these positive, productive symptoms, which also affected others involved in the proving around the same time.

At the end of April 2002 I had a lot of work to do for college. Normally I am organised and like to get things in on time; I can't bear the stress of leaving things to the last minute. Unlike my usual self, I kept putting it off and doing other things instead. I left assignments to the very last moment, staying up until 3am to get them finished. I had never done this before; I remember feeling slightly unnerved by this change in attitude. It was as if I didn't care about the outcome, as if I could see no further than the moment. I had a live case to analyse and write up; I'd done many of these before, yet it was as if it was my first case ever. I didn't know where to start with it, as if I'd forgotten completely what to do. I wrote in my journal at the time: 'What an effort! What is wrong?'

I did not connect any of this with the proving until a couple of days later, at the beginning of May 2002, when we had an experiential workshop weekend at college. Several of the people involved in the proving took part in the weekend. During role-play I had a huge crisis of confidence; I was playing the part of the homeopath. It was as if suddenly I couldn't write, couldn't think, again it was as if I were doing this for the first time (we had

previously done loads of role-play). I was surprised and overwhelmed by the emotion I felt. I was very tearful and felt as if I did not want to be there. I wrote in my journal that it felt 'slightly surreal'. It was as if this were not happening to me. At the end of the day we sat in a circle and talked about how the weekend had gone. It was then that some of those involved in the proving expressed similar feelings and issues around confidence that they had experienced during the weekend and at other times since the proving. I felt better knowing this wasn't just me feeling like this, that there was some kind of synchronicity or bond between those of us who had been involved.

May is the time when beekeepers wanting to increase their colonies will remove nuclei from a strong hive (that is two or three combs containing brood, eggs, bees and honey) and put it into a nucleus box. Being without a queen, the bees immediately make queen cells, or allow a queen to hatch. I was like one of those worker bees, taken out of the security of the hive, and suddenly had no centre or purpose. The feeling was like going into a kind of freefall, with no boundaries. Luckily this feeling did not last long, and just as the workers begin to make queen cells or allow a queen to hatch, I was back to business as usual. However, it has led me to look deep inside myself. After all, anything that comes up in a proving is not something that comes in from outside, but it is there already, somewhere in the prover. Where did this huge dip in confidence and insecurity come from? Why did it come out now? Painful though it was at the time, it was good to share it with my colleagues; it made me realise how lucky we are as homeopaths to be able share our 'stuff' with like-minded people who are supportive and interested.

Looking back at it now, it seems as if those of us who were directly involved in the proving were part of something very special, slightly secretive. Everyone was aware the proving was going on, but they wanted to know what was going on, what was the remedy? It was rather like looking at a beehive: white and calm on the outside, yet buzzing, a 'hive of activity' on the inside. The proving had an effect not only on those taking part, but also on the dynamic of the college itself. This shows how a remedy affects not only the person who takes it, but those around the person, just as a stone thrown into a pond sends ripples outwards.

Personally, I found that being a prover was a wonderful learning experience, particularly being involved in such a well organised proving. Provers need to feel secure and supported by the team around them, as it is unknown territory for all.