



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - MAY 2008

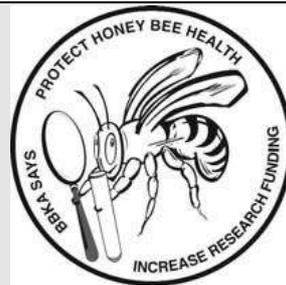
BOB's BIT

Rooker Rides to the Rescue

If a week is a long time in politics, then a month is like another space-time. At a meeting just before Christmas, the minister was saying there was no way in which the Government would put it's hand in it's pocket to combat the threat to our bees.

In a characteristic "U" turn, His Lordship now fears that without emergency measures the honey bee will disappear within a decade. (Times April 9th.) The article is unusually accurate – for a newspaper – and outlines some proposed measures. A national database of beekeepers – how long before a disc of data is lost on the hazardous crossing of Whitehall? More training on disease recognition. A consultation paper – good for six month's delay.

To see what DEFRA has put together, go to www.defra.gov.uk, then find Animal Health > news > 8 April. You will require a glossary (a collection of glosses) , and will then find that you are a stakeholder! At the end you are left with the feeling that somehow its all your fault, you will have to mend your ways before the Men From The Ministry descend on you. So a year will be lost while Rome burns.



APIARY MEETING

**2.30 p.m. SATURDAY 17th
MAY 2008**

With George Hand at :

**Facombe Cottage
70 The Dean
Alresford**

Coming from Winchester, The Dean is the left turning opposite the road to Cheriton. Facombe Cottage is the second last house on the right, just past Arle Close.

There is a gate in the wall from the track to the watercress beds. Please use this to enter but find parking spaces on the road as the owner of the watercress beds does not allow parking in the lane.

On the same website you will find interesting leads to BBKA proceedings on winter losses and Defra reports on jolly beasts like the Small Hive Beetle (for which they *have* got funding).

Nearer home, several members have reported heavier-than-usual losses. I have no unexplained losses, but weak colonies and

slow build-up. Tell Russell Fairchild of your losses, he is collecting statistics.

After the most delayed spring I can recall, you will see why I have been going on about checking for adequate food stores. Dead bees with their heads in empty cells is, I'm afraid, down to you. But to finish on a better note, I took my first swarm of the year.

APIARY MEETING Saturday 19th April.



Seven hardy members turned out to Three Maids Hill on a cold and windy afternoon. Bob deemed it feasible to open only two of his colonies, and then only briefly - one that was queen-less (and therefore had no brood to chill) and one that was bad tempered (which he did not have a lot of sympathy for!). During the course of this exercise a couple of frames of brood and eggs were transferred to the queen-less colony, to remedy its deficiency and this was considered sufficient business completed to justify moving swiftly on to the second

part of the agenda – in the warmth and comfort of 53 Cheriton Road. We there enjoyed very welcome cups of tea, sandwiches and large slices of Isabel's home-made cakes. Many thanks Isabel and Alfred.

WINTER LOSSES

Twenty three responses have been received to our recent e-mail survey of members' colony overwintering experiences. Many thanks to all those who replied.

The responses covered a total of 103 colonies of which 37 (36%) failed to come through the winter for various reasons. We have no prior year statistics or information from other associations, so cannot judge objectively whether this total is good or bad – but it doesn't sound good.

Because of the large number of uncontrolled variables, no attempt has been made to analyse the causes, but some people included comments. The gist of these is summarised as follows.

Several of the lost colonies were weak going into the winter, but others were "well fed and healthy at the end of the summer". A number were thought to have suffered starvation, even after having been observed flying strongly in numbers on clear sunny days in the latter part of the winter. One colony noted as having been particularly strong and with plenty of stores, disappeared completely (CCD?).

But note the following extract from....

BEEKEEPING STUDY NOTES, MODULE 6 - HONEYBEE BEHAVIOUR

"Very often bees can be seen flying at air temperatures lower

than 10 degs C; the actual temperature of the bee is therefore above 10 degs. Water collecting in the spring can be a very hazardous occupation for the honeybee; it must not allow its body temperature to fall below the critical 10 degs C while it is taking water or it can never return to the hive."

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A few subscription renewals are still outstanding. If they are still outstanding on 24th May, those concerned will be deemed to be lapsed members and dropped from the Newsletter distribution.

WINCHESTER PRISON BEES

Progress with this project is held pending the resolution of prison Health and Safety concerns.

BEE STING ALLERGY SURVEY

This was first hinted at in the last BBKA News and is now ready to proceed. The survey is conducted via a specialised web site and takes very little time. You do not have to give your name and the survey is subject to all the ethical controls of any medical study. The information below is from the researchers. A more complete article will appear in BBKA News as soon as possible, as will the results later in the year. If you want to see more information now, e-mail your request to Chris Deaves

(c_deaves@compuserve.com).

Please respond if you are a beekeeper, the survey is not just about severe reactions to stings, it is trying (in part) to establish the extent of this among our community so ALL RESULTS ARE IMPORTANT.

"Can we sting you for some help? All UK beekeepers are invited to take part in a nationwide survey. Doctors at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital have designed an easy to complete web based questionnaire to establish, for the first time, how common bee venom allergy is in the UK beekeeping community and how historically it has been managed. The survey takes 5-7 minutes to complete.

If you would like more information about bee venom allergy the next BBKA news has an article with all the ins and outs of this often frustrating problem for some beekeepers.

Thank you all in advance for agreeing to take part in this bee venom survey, your responses are greatly valued and time appreciated.

Dr A Richter and Dr MT Krishna
Department of Immunology and Allergy
Birmingham Heartlands Hospital"

Please use the following link from the BBKA website.

http://www.britishbee.org.uk/news/current_news/bee-sting-allergy-survey.shtml

MEON VALLEY AUCTION

THIS Saturday 3rd May at The Village Hall, Greatham, Nr Liss. 1.00 p.m. prompt. Viewing from 11.30 a.m.

ANY NEW E-MAILERS?

If you do not already receive the Newsletter by e-mail, but are able to do so, please let me know your e-mail address.

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