



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2008

### BOB'S BIT

While my trip to the Emerald Isle was very pleasant, bees were a rarity. Probably the wind, at least on the west coast, had something to do with it. My search for Yeats' "bee-loud glade" led to a potty little island on a lake, not at all what I'd expected. And I found that Yeats wasn't the nice chap of my school Eng. Lit lessons, in fact a bit of a fascist. But I did enjoy the lonely stalactite in the Caves of Doolin (remember, tights come down and mites grow up). I called it lonely because it had no stalagmite growing up to meet it. See it at [www.doolincave.ie](http://www.doolincave.ie)

I had an educational experience when doing a recent inspection. It was totally without brood, though there were five frames of it on the previous inspection. Something wasn't right, for a start they were well behaved, unlike a queen-less stock. So I pulled a frame out of the middle of a super, and there was the brood, heaps of it. Madam had to be returned to the right side of the excluder, so I put an eke on the excluder and with a spare super to take the shaken frames, set to shaking each one carefully.

But why, I hear you cry, not shake them down straight into the broodbox? But I had ambitions to mark the queen, and hoped to sieve her out from her attendants. Nothing doing with the first super, and part way through the



### NEXT APIARY MEETING Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September

*The next meeting will be with Ros Medd and Russell Fairchild at Twyford. Details will be provided in the next newsletter.*

second I thought to actually look for her.

Two frames later, and there she was, the first time for a while that I've spotted one. I caught her with one of those plastic things like a bulldog clip, giving me time to find the marker pen and the spiked marking cage. I marked her lavishly, and once the paint was dry, slipped her down under the excluder. It only remains to let the drones out as they emerge.

This hot spell has produced a flurry of activity, as this curious year wanders on its quixotic way. I think I may have a crop after all.....

### 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY APIARY MEETING

In spite of a somewhat uncertain forecast, it turned out to be a beautiful sunny afternoon as fourteen of us gathered in Robin and Sandra Houghton's spacious garden.

We were to open three hives, one a recent prime swarm for inspection, the second an allegedly unfriendly lot and the third an apparently queen-less colony, possibly to be united with another stock to remedy the problem.



*Rob gives the briefing for the afternoon activities.*

The prime swarm were very well behaved and in good order, the unfriendly lot not as unfriendly as anticipated and the queen-less colony was found to have a queen after all! An interesting and enjoyable afternoon was rounded off with a wonderful tea generously provided by Sandra and Rob - very many thanks.

Thanks are also due to the unknown lady who kindly donated six eggs for the raffle.

## **ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August**

The Park Road allotments in Winchester are having an open day on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2-5pm and are providing a gazebo for W&DBKA. Alan Johnson is kindly lending us his observation hive and Bob will do the Quiz we had at Hilliers last year.

We still need at least one more to help Bob, Erica, Pat and Hugh L and Russell, to 'man' the stall. Why not come along and help and sell some honey as well?

Please contact Pat Loftin on 01962 861176.

## **BASIC ASSESSMENTS**

The association apiary was used for the HBA basic Assessments last month and David Nield, who was supervising them, writes:

"My sincere thanks to .... WDBKA for helping HBA to put on the Assessments in July and hope the colonies haven't been disturbed too much. Mine (that means two!!) are now going mad with all the recent lovely weather bringing honey in from all directions.

Please convey my thanks to all those members whose bees we

used. (i.e. *Bob Geary and Ed Thornton*).

Best wishes,

David"

Three WDBKA members participated and their results will be published next month.

## **NECROPHORESIS From Beekeeping Study Notes by J D & B D Yates Module 6 - Bee Behaviours.**

"During the summer months most worker bees die away from the hive on their last foraging trip. However, some do die in the nest or hive and the number has been estimated to be between 20 and 200 hundred per day in a strong full sized colony.

Also, it has been estimated that about 1% of the bees in such a colony (say about 400) are undertaker bees spending their time removing the dead bees in the colony. Only one or two dead bees are likely to be found in a colony at any one time.

A dead bee produces a chemical odour about 15 minutes after death and the odour (pheromone ...) elicits the required behavioural effect from the undertaker bees.

The dead are generally removed within an hour during the day and the corpses are carried between

10 and 100 metres away from the nest.

Winter bees that die during the clustering period are removed on good flying days, more particularly in the spring.

We have not been able to discover the general ages of undertaker bees. This behaviour is an effective response system for minimising the spread of disease. Necrophoresis is slower in inclement weather and small colonies.

The same undertaker bees also remove dead brood. Because the dead brood is removed as quickly as adult corpses it makes it difficult to see the dead larvae of EFB and Sacbrood except when brood outnumbers the adult bee population."

## **FOR SALE AND WANTED**

Ros Medd is hoping to obtain second-hand a small electric extractor suitable for Langstroth frames this year. If you can help, please contact her on 01962 712463 or by e-mail at:

[Ros.medd@btinternet.com](mailto:Ros.medd@btinternet.com)

If any members are in need of specific equipment or have equipment for sale, please let the editor know, preferably by e-mail (see below).

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