



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2009

BOB'S BIT

The persistence of Ho-Ho-Ho-ing and angelic choruses led me to consider the Bible's coverage of bee-keeping. There is, of course, the quote on the Golden Syrup tin, which probably affected my judgement in taking up the craft. Then there are the references to Israel "flowing with milk and honey". Though things may have changed a bit by the time I got there, when the honey was thin and runny like the Cretan sample. In the Lebanon, not far as bees go, some people still keep bees in clay pipes or pots, much as people here still use WBCs. The Amorites "came out against you and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you" (the Israelites) Deuteronomy 1:44. Well, we've all had bees like that!

What can a bee-keeper do at this, the perigee of his year? If it's too cold to prepare frames out in the workshop, then how about reading a good book from our library? If you are fortunate, you might pot up some honey. I have a potential outlet for ivy honey, so I am going to render down some of my accidental crop and put it

AGM Cheese & Wine Reception 7.30 p.m. TUESDAY January 13th Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Agenda

- 1 Welcome and Apologies
- 2 Minutes of 2008 AGM
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Chairman's Report
- 5 Secretary's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report
- 7 Association Equipment
- 8 Subscription Rates for 2009
- 9 Election of President
- 10 Election of Officers
- 11 Appointment of Delegates to HBA
- 12 Appointment of Swarm Co-ordinator
- 13 Programme of Events
- 14 Any Other Business

Nominations for officers or committee to Pat please, ahead of the meeting.

to the test. You will recall the man who claimed that cultivated palates appreciated strong flavours, as over-ripe pheasant or the cheese charmingly called Stinking Bishop.

Then you might (it being New Year) resolve to take an exam. The Basic Assessment, which is a practical test at a local apiary, makes for an enjoyable and informative hour with a helpful assessor and (usually) cooperative bees. Or how about trying an exam module? Read December BBKA News page 16 for details and contact Pat to tell her your intentions.

Before the Winter of our Discontent is made glorious summer, you can all come to the AGM to thank the officers for their work, stand for office (as I know you are all eager to do), and have a drink on the Chairman. Happy New Bee-keeping Year.

CHRISTMAS SUPPER AND QUIZ



Alfred and Isabel's spicy hot *Gluhwein* and canapés warmed 'the cockles' on arrival and as

we sat down at the festive tables.

Astra's hot supper of deliciously flavoured pheasant, baked potatoes and salad, followed by a selection of roulades, seasonally satisfied our appetites. And as coffee was served, our 'little grey cells' were challenged by Bob's fiendish quiz – general knowledge with a beekeeping flavour (how many of you know what HMF stands for - without looking it up?!).

An excellent evening was had by all, thanks to Pat's hard work and organising skills and to all those who helped.



GETTING THROUGH THE WINTER

Everyone will want to avoid the level of losses of last winter, and Ian Homer has

written about this in his most recent 'Around and About the Region'. If you have read it already, please re-read it and take the necessary action.

With winter survival in mind, it is also worth re-reading Ivor Davis' piece on 'Inside Your Hive' in the December issue of BBKA News. Of particular relevance to giving the bees a good start in the spring, is the paragraph on the use of Oxalic acid at this time of year.

BEEKEEPING STUDY NOTES, MODULE 5 - HONEYBEE BIOLOGY

J D & B D Yates
(Available from the library)

"Drones are naturally expelled from the nest before winter and the size of the colony reduces as the queen stops laying. The large consumption of pollen in the autumn increases the fat bodies and the hypopharyngeal glands increase in size. The decrease in size of the colony provides a greater amount of Queen substance per bee to inhibit the development of the worker ovaries. Honey is also consumed, converted to glycogen and stored in the fat bodies, mainly in the dorsal roof of the abdomen. With the decrease in temperature as winter draws near, the colony

metabolism slows down. The winter colony is similar to a queen-less colony with little or no brood to rear. When workers cease to rear brood then their lives are extended very considerably."

Finally, and by way of consolation for the prolonged period of very cold weather we have been experiencing:

"... long cold winters are bad news for *Varroa jacobsoni* because fewer infested bees survive until brood rearing starts again in the spring."

FOR SALE AND WANTED

As well as maintaining your equipment and making it ready for the spring, now is a good time to take stock of your equipment and decide what is surplus to requirements and what else you are going to need. Please let the Editor know of any items you would like included under this heading in the next Newsletter.

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...and best wishes for your knee op on 6th January Isabel!