



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2009

### BOB's BIT

I have a cherished LP of Jon Pertwee singing Songs for Vulgar Boatmen. One song tells of a sailor whose sailing is delayed and returns home to find his wife occupied with her lover:

“And then as he shot them, he thought, with concern, that no matter how old, there is still much to learn”

Though the sex life of a queen bee is not a good example to the young, there are many other aspects of our craft worth studying. So in the spirit of Jon's sailor we should try to broaden our knowledge and take an exam or two to test ourselves. I am inspired by my basic proficiency certificate which is before me as I write, framed and hung up with sundry others on what Americans call a “praise wall”. As I can't see anything through a microscope, I am going to try for the certificate in Bee Husbandry. I invite you to join me on the path and if you come to the next apiary meeting we can do a mock Basic exam.

My heart goes out to my bees in this showery weather. Imagine struggling home with a bucket of nectar in each hand, only to be hit in the back of your neck by a water droplet as big as your head. Small wonder if they sit at home and grizzle like children unable to play outside. So it was a pleasant surprise when I looked at the garden stock that it was so well-behaved. But the sun was out at that moment, and I treated them to Porgy and Bess, “summertime, and the livin' is easy”.

There is still some nectar coming in, though not very fast. Will this be one of those years when it's all over after the first week of August?

### **NEXT APIARY MEETING Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup>**

This will be held at the Association's Three Maids Hill Apiary, and afterwards tea with Avril.

*Directions: Available from the secretary.*

### **APIARY MEETING, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

In spite of an inauspicious weather forecast, 22 members and prospective members turned out for a most interesting meeting in Hugh and Barbara Sykes' beautiful garden, where Hugh had four colonies available for inspection.

The afternoon was sunny as we arrived. Hugh briefed us on the work to be done, comprising re-housing one colony and uniting a weak one with it, also inspecting two recently acquired swarms. While George Hand led the inspection of the swarms, Hugh led the re-housing and uniting. In the course of the latter task, having shaken the weak colony into the top box it was necessary to find the queen and remove her so that she wouldn't upset the equilibrium of the happy colony in the bottom box, also to be taken to a new home with Rob Houghton's bees. But by now the clouds had gathered and it was starting to rain. Being under trees, light was in short supply so it became necessary, to

the amusement of all, to use a torch for this task. She was seen, but disappeared before the being caught. So the bees from the top box were shaken out a little distance away so that the flying workers would find their way back to the top box, now set over a queen excluder, leaving the queen behind.



*Beekeeping by torchlight!*

With the rain becoming heavy, we adjourned slightly early for tea, which in addition to abundant sandwiches and cakes included a delectable flan of fresh summer fruits from the garden. Very many thanks Barbara.

### **WDBKA WEB SITE UPDATE.**

Tim has created a 'Members Only' area in our website, for holding documents such as the HBA Handbook (which has become too expensive to produce in hard copy). You will need a User Name and password as follows:

User name: \*\*\*\*\* Password: \*\*\*\*\*

### **HBA WINTER LOSSES**

The results from HBA associations have now been aggregated and are summarized as follows.

Total returns	134
Total hives	651
Total losses	173 (26.6%)

By comparison WDBKA had 27.7% losses, as reported in the May newsletter.

### **INTECH – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August**

Following on from the very successful information day we did at Intech on March 7<sup>th</sup> we have been asked to do another in support of "Save our Bees". This is arranged for Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August. We need some enthusiastic beekeepers to man the stall and talk to the visitors who will be mainly schoolchildren. If you can manage an hour or two between 10-4pm it will be appreciated. There is enough free parking. Please let either myself or Hugh Sykes know what you can do, so we don't all turn up at once!

### **NATIONAL HONEY SHOW**

**Weybridge, Surrey 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009**

The National Honey Show is the 'gold standard' honey show – the equivalent of Wimbledon for tennis players. There are almost 250 classes and beekeepers come from all over the world to enter so it is truly an international show.

A full programme of workshops and lectures will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of trade stands with equipment and books to buy. If you are in your first year of beekeeping you can get in free! Your association secretary must apply for this on your behalf to the NHS General Secretary. Contact the Rev. HF Capener, 1 Baldrick Road, Folkestone, CT20 2NR. Email [showsec@zbee.com](mailto:showsec@zbee.com)

The 2009 schedule of classes and entry application is available from the membership secretary, Sandra Rickwood. Please telephone her for a copy on 020 33 55 8716 and leave your name and address after the recorded message.

Admission for non-members is £12 but you can become a member of the National Honey Show for £10 (or £11 via PayPal) and then entry is free for all three days. Accompanied children of 16 years and under are free and additional family members over 16 years living at the same address can come in for £5 each. On Saturday admission after 12 noon is £5 for everyone. You can join at the door or by contacting the membership secretary, Mrs Sandra Rickwood, 19 Kenwood Drive, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 5AU. Or email [srhoneyshow@googlemail.com](mailto:srhoneyshow@googlemail.com) or telephone 020 33 55 8716 and leave a message.