



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2009

BOB's BIT

At this time last year I was remarking on the absence of wasps, and wondering what had become of them. I could have spared my concern, for they are back in large numbers, making me wonder how many will attend when I start extracting. They must have a nest somewhere near, but I've failed to find it. One year, a letter in Farmers Weekly advised that if you tied a piece of cotton to a wasp, you would be able to keep it in sight on its way home. My beekeeping neighbour and I managed to put a noose around a wasp's waist, and then released it. The wasp fell to the ground, untied the thread and flew off with a sneer. Wasps 1 : Homo sapiens 0. I think the letter-writer had his tongue in his cheek.

Have you all got your clearer boards in? Then you will have some idea of how good a crop you have. But like counting chickens, this is not the whole story. Some honey will run like borage, some as stiff as rape. I was speaking to a beekeeper who had no fear of rock-hard ivy honey. He said it was just a matter of taking it off at the right time. Anyway, no smell of it yet.

I took the supers off one stock up on the hill, and the excluder was half choked with dead bees. On examination, they were all drones. Puzzle, where did they come from? Was Queenie hiding upstairs? Had I done an artificial swarm, and forgotten to release the drones? A mysterious drone-breeder? But queenie was down where she belonged, and according to my records (sound of own trumpet) there had been no amalgamations or artificial swarms. Come and see them at the next meeting.

NEXT APIARY MEETING Saturday September 12th

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

Directions:

Please contact the Secretary.

INTECH – Friday 14th August

This was another successful 'outreach' day providing information about bees and beekeeping to families, and especially children. As ever the observation hive attracted great interest, and our new 'virtual' hive proved to be invaluable in explaining what a hive consists of and how the bees live in it. Candle making was also popular, as well as the microscopes and film 'Dancing with Bees' which were in almost constant use. After a quiet first hour we were almost non-stop busy until after 4.00 p.m, during which time we had a number of enquiries from prospective new members and also sold a few jars of honey!



New member Gerald Hill explaining beekeeping basics at Intech using the 'Virtual' hive.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Extracted from 'Beekeeping Study Notes' Volume 2 by JD and BD Yates, Module 6.

"Measurements on over wintering colonies have established that the internal temperature of the cluster varies ... between 20 degs C and 30 degs C providing there is no brood present.

When brood rearing starts the brood area is maintained at the incubation temperature of ...34 degs C.

The surface temperature of the cluster is never allowed to fall below ... 7 degs C the temperature that the bees become immobile.

There is no evidence, as far as we know, to suggest that the bees on the outside of the cluster are continually changing and moving inside to warm up; it would be physically difficult for them to do this as they have their wings spread. However, it has been observed that a few bees move from the inside to the outer surface. This behaviour presumably is because of overheating in the middle of the cluster and the life of the bee is shortened when subject to high temperature for any length of time. The work of D P Jefferies is relevant in connection with the size of the colony for over wintering and too large a colony develops unduly high temperatures at the centre of the winter cluster."

HAMPSHIRE BKA AUTUMN CONVENTION AND HONEY SHOW **Saturday 14th November**

This year the Convention will be held at Barton Peverill College, Eastleigh. Full details are provided in Hampshire Bee Talk which is being distributed to full members in hard copy, concurrently with this Newsletter. Please make every effort to attend and participate. Tickets are available in advance from Pat Loftin at £10 each.

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW **Weybridge, Surrey 29th to 31st October 2009**

A full programme of workshops and lectures will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of trade stands.

The 2009 schedule of classes and entry application is available from the NHS membership secretary, Sandra Rickwood, telephone 020 33 55 8716.

Admission for non-members is £12 but you can become a member 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 living at the same address can come in for £5 each. On Saturday admission after 12 noon is £5 for everyone. Join by contacting Mrs Sandra Rickwood, 19 Kenwood Drive, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 5AU. Or email srhoneyshow@googlemail.com or telephone 020 33 55 8716.

CASH & CARRY

Bookers at Woodside Road, Eastleigh are offering an account number to WDBKA members who may wish to buy sugar in bulk. We can all use it but should bring our BBKA card and pay for what we buy on the day. All their sugar is 'Silver Spoon' and British and comes in packs of 6x2kg @ £7.74; 5k sacks @ £5.95 and 10kg @ £10.89. Other outlets may be cheaper. We should mention we are from Winchester & District BKA and the important number is available from the Secretary.