



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2010

BOB's BIT

I climbed out of the first possible weather window, and paid a duty call on the colonies in the garden. All was quiet as a turkey farm until, bending down to look in the entrance, I heard the girls singing. Adjusting my personal stereo, (a.k.a. hearing aids) I distinctly heard a chorus of "The Holly and the Ivy", and then they started that round-song "Green grow the rushes oh". Except that it was the communist version, where the chorus is "One is worker's unity, and evermore shall be so".

Are bees communists? I'm sure some earnest social scientist has made a PhD dissertation out of it, at the university of Tomsk, (or perhaps Omsk).

The day after the Christmas party was very mild, and I went up the hill (*Three Maids – Ed.*) to administer Oxalic acid all round. It was so mild that some of the bees were flying, when I would have preferred for them to sit between the combs, rubbing their hands together to keep warm. Here my secret weapon was useful, a spray-bottle of weak syrup to divert attention. Next time I go up to the site will be time to put on carpet squares for a bit of extra warmth, to encourage build-up.

A modest exercise in arithmetic shows that it is six weeks from egg to foraging bee, and my aim is to have young foragers on parade from the third week in March, based on the state of the winter rape on Barton Farm. Thus the encouragement must begin in early Feb. The next concern will be a supply of pollen. The garden bees should be well supplied, we have hellebores out already. On the hill, I may try some pollen substitute. A spring feed can do no harm, at the least it gives them some convenient water. It should be in a contact feeder, straight on top of the brood.

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday January 12th
7.30 pm at Itchen Abbas Village Hall

AGM – with Cheese and Wine

This will provide a relaxed start to the New Year. As well as a brief resume of the past year there will be information on a few changes to the way we will be operating in the future, not least to enable us to manage our larger membership efficiently, and to further improve the education and training we provide to members – new and old – and to the wider community, consistent with our anticipated Registered Charity status.

Nominees are required for election as officers or members of the Management Committee, in particular Pat Loftin is standing down as Hon. Secretary. Nominations please to Pat a.s.a.p.

The formal business will be dealt with as swiftly and efficiently as ever, so that we can get on with the important social aspects of the occasion!

We look forward to seeing you there.

Any contributions for the raffle will be most welcome.

Directions: *Itchen Abbas is on the B3047 between Kings Worthy and New Alresford. When coming from Winchester the entrance to the Village Hall is on your left in the centre of the village, immediately after a sharp right-hand bend. If you are coming from Alresford, it is on your right after 'The Trout' inn.*

CHRISTMAS SUPPER AND QUIZ Tuesday December 8th



Alfred's hot *gluhwein* provided a welcome and appropriate start to our evening, followed by Astra's delicious hot buffet (brochettes of lemon chicken and vegetables with hot cous cous and/or a vegetable quiche) and suitably wicked deserts. The accompanying wines were generously provided by Hugh and the quiz, as intriguing and challenging as ever, by Bob.

There was an excellent array of prizes for the customary raffle, including a flight in a glider at the Lasham Gliding Centre. This was generously provided by Gerald Hill and won by Ron Broadway.



The President receives his raffle prize from Gerald.

With twenty eight people attending this was our largest supper in recent years. A big 'thank you' Pat for all your hard work in organising it, including the festively decorated tables, to Astra(*nomique*) for the

super supper, and to all those who helped make it a most relaxed and enjoyable occasion.

BBKA MODULE EXAMINATIONS - 2010

Applications need to be in by 10th February for the exams on 20th March. Please contact Pat Loftin as soon as possible to start the entry process, e-mail preferred:

(secretary@winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk),

Why not start with Module 1 – Honeybee Management? If you have been beekeeping for a few years, you will probably find that you already know a large amount of what is required. Other modules comprise, among others, Honey Bee Products and Forage, Honey Bee Diseases Pests and Poisoning, and Intermediate Honey Bee Biology.

DID YOU KNOW...?

Extracted from 'Beekeeping Study Notes' Volume 2 by JD and BD Yates, Module 6 (6.18.3 j)

If you are worried about your bees surviving the cold weather:

“By clustering and generating heat a normal healthy colony of *Apis mellifera* from northern latitudes with adequate stores can survive temperatures down to -35 degrees C without any special management by man.”

Also (in 6.18.7): “Experiments have shown that the colony temperature increases by about 10 degrees C if it is disturbed during the winter. This behaviour pattern is understood to be a defensive mechanism. The bees on the outside of the cluster are incapable of flying and they extend their stings; this will produce the alarm pheromone. The temperature rise is to warm the flight muscles ready for flying in defence of the colony. High temperatures shorten the life of a bee; it is for this reason that it is undesirable to disturb the colony in winter.”

However, the benefits of oxalic acid treatment in controlling Varroa are likely to far outweigh any adverse effects of disturbing the colony to apply it.

FOR SALE AND WANTED

Don't forget, you can advertise equipment which you no longer need, in this newsletter. Contact the editor as shown at the top of the first page, preferably by e-mail.