



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2010

BOB's BIT

“Spring will be a little late this year”. Well it *sounds* like the title of a song. I can imagine the tune. Certainly nothing springlike to be seen, just catkins and crocuses.

“If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” Oh yes it can, Shelley. When you come to the opening apiary meeting (Three Maids Hill), look at the saplings in the shelter belt. Rabbits have ring-barked them all for lack of other forage. So even the bunnies have had a hard time.

It has been a hard winter for my bees too. Though they were well fed, I have lost two stocks out of six. When it's cold, it is hard to open these colonies to see if there is any sign of disease. One was definitely an old queen, but the other was only in her second year. I am going to give the survivors a spring feed of thin syrup, in the hope that they will build up well and make nucs.

I was preparing to do a “Bailey” frame change on one of the casualties. It is a procedure that appeals to me because there is no lifting of heavy brood-boxes. It relies on the tendency of bees to:

1. work upwards and
2. not to store below the brood.

Take out a couple of nice broody frames, (with the queen, if you can find her) and put in the middle of your nice fresh box. You put the fresh box on top of the old one, with some sort of entrance between them, and then block up the original entrance. They will need feeding, unless there is a good flow on. After three weeks, there should be no brood down in the old box, and you can take it away and recycle the comb. It strikes me that it would be a useful solution if you inherit a neglected hive, with everything hopelessly gummed together. A refined form of the practice of

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday March 9th
7.30 pm at Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Robert Carpenter-Turner SBI(Wiltshire)

‘Other Peoples Bees’

Robert will be giving a light hearted talk describing some of his experiences in his first year as a Bee Inspector. He will welcome questions and discussion.

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.*

driving bees out of an upturned skep and up into a new one, as an alternative to killing them all with smoke.

EVENING MEETING
Tuesday 16TH February

Twenty members heard Teresa Waterworth, a bee farmer from Petersfield and a WDBKA member, give us a highly informative talk on ‘Honey Marketing’. Supported by a comprehensive set of view-foils, her information-packed presentation covered everything from market segmentation, positioning and differentiation through branding and label design and manufacture, to product diversification, for example honey fudge and honey marmalade.

Honey, and in particular local honey, is now scarce and becoming a luxury product, consequently it is

deemed to be expensive. An effect of this is an increasing trend towards smaller jars and alternative packaging.

UK production is around 7,000 tonnes but UK consumption is 21 to 24,000 tonnes. 85 to 90% is used for domestic table consumption and only about 10% for industrial purposes. The world supply is falling, but consumption is going up.



After the presentation Isabel and Alfred discuss marketing issues with Teresa and Bob.

BEEKEEPING FOR ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

WDBKA is running a one day 'taster' course on Saturday 13th March, for people who are interested in the possibility of taking up beekeeping. At a later date they will be given the opportunity for brief 'hands on' experience of hive manipulation.

The purpose is to enable non-beekeepers to understand what beekeeping will involve in terms of time and responsibilities, before they commit themselves to a full course and the acquisition of equipment and bees. The course is now fully booked.

APIARY MEETING HOSTS

We would welcome offers from people who would be able to host a summer apiary visit on a Saturday afternoon. We are, in particular, looking for someone to host the meeting scheduled for 11 September 2010.

Ideally we would like to have about 3 or more hives to look at, somewhere to park cars, and somewhere to have tea and biscuits. Please contact Stephen Tompsett, 01962 864553 or e-mail: stephentompsett@waitrose.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your annual subscriptions should have been sent to the Treasurer, Robin Leonard, by now. The renewal form was provided with last month's Newss letter. If you haven't yet done so, please send it to him right away and ensure that your Bee Diseases Insurance cover is in place for the coming season.

HIVE LOCATIONS AND IDENTIFICATION

Your committee ask you to please mark all your hives with your contact details, especially if they are at an out apiary. Please also ensure that they are registered on BeeBase by contacting our RBI Nigel Semmence on 01264 338694 or at: nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk

APIARY MEETING SATURDAY 10th APRIL

At the Association's Three Maids Hill Apiary, followed by equipment viewing and tea and biscuits at Bob Geary's house.

SOUTH HANTS SPRING BEEKEEPING CONVENTION March 13th

Pat Loftin (01962 861176) has tickets available for this convention, to be held this year at Portsmouth. They are £10 from Pat now, or £12.50 on the door.

NEWBURY BKA ANNUAL LEAVER LECTURE Friday 12th March. 7.30 p.m. 'What future for honeybees?' - Max Watkins

Dr Max Watkins is research and development director at Vita (Europe) Ltd. Existing products include Apistan and Apiguard. The lecture will be held at the Sutton Hall, Church Road, Stockcross, RG20 8LN.

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW (NHS) 28th – 30th October, Weybridge, Surrey

There will be a full programme of workshops and lectures with world class speakers, and a wide selection of equipment and books to buy. While you wait for the active season to start, have a look at the NHS website: www.honeyshow.co.uk