



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2010

### BOB's BIT

According to Kipling, there is a Scots engineer at the foot of every ship's engine-room ladder. At the heart of every effective society there is a Treasurer, and we have been fortunate to have been faithfully served for so many years by Robin.



My collection of old Newsletters only goes back to 1990, when I find that Robin was both treasurer and newsletter editor, but in 1993 Sid Pullinger was also trawling the archives. He found that the Association had collapsed in the seventies and was re-formed in January 1976 with a committee containing (of course) Robin as treasurer. The fact that there is never a rush to take on the task should not diminish our respect for a person who, at every AGM for thirty-four years, willingly accepted the burden. We will all have our personal recollections, I personally approve his philosophy of never throwing things away, and seeking to reuse them in some ingenious way.

I was surprised, in those old newsletters, to read that we were already embroiled with varroa, and blowing

### **NEXT MEETING**

**TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 7.30 p.m.**  
**Itchen Abbas Village Hall**

### **CHRISTMAS SUPPER**



Just one place left! Contact Angela: 01962 712 443.

tobacco smoke into our hives to test the level of infestation. I had the feeling that it was a more recent problem. BBKA are now more concerned by the threat of the Small Hive Beetle, and the Asiatic Hornet, which are apparently standing on Cap Gris Nez like Hitler, eyeing their target. The only proper response at this season is a glass of mead to drink confusion to our enemies and a Happy Christmas to ourselves.

### **THE BRAINS TRUST, Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November** Report by Derek Mason

The meeting was well attended, including a number of first time bee keepers. The first question was about whether it is better to purchase a nucleus or to wait for a swarm? The panel were divided on this, but did agree that if a beekeeper wished to purchase a nucleus the best time to do so would be around end April and early May, and then only from a reputable supplier. The best varieties of queen are the New Zealand queens or a local queen. The cost would be about £20 each. One member asked why a young queen often died after a few weeks. This was due to the poor weather over past few years. Cold and wet weather is detrimental to bees' survival and affects the mating process, resulting in a weak colony which is unable to sustain itself.

A further question concerned food for the autumn and early winter months. It was advised that during these months the colony would gather ivy nectar and pollen, but the addition of sugar syrup solution in a feeder is also important.



***The Brains: (l to R) David Purchase, George Hand, Bob Geary, Hugh Sykes (Chairman).***

It was noted that in general beekeepers living in towns had more successful colonies than those in the country. The reasons were felt to be that in towns food sources are more varied and prolific. A further observation was that bees that had only access to red clover did less well than those on white clover. This is because the bee's tongue is not long enough to reach the nectar in red clover.

A concern for all members is the control and elimination of disease and infestation. Inspections should be carried out regularly so that problems can be dealt with speedily. For the treatment of Varroa the recommendation is to use Apiguard, Ascetic acid or Oxalic acid, but Apiguard is the preferred treatment.

The benefits of plastic and polystyrene hives over the traditional wood variety were questioned. The panel advised that Polystyrene hives have good insulation properties but plastic hives are expensive. In both cases disposal when defunct is extremely difficult. Woodpeckers are always a problem and may target any type of hive, but the traditional wooden hive is much the easiest to repair.

The panel advised that unused frames and supers should be stored over winter in a dry, vermin proof area such as the back of a garage. If they can be wrapped in heavy duty polythene prior to storage this would be ideal, but newspaper can also be successful.

Some beekeepers had concerns about honey with a "frosty" look. This is due to air trapped in the honey during the granulation or bottling process. Ways of overcoming this are constant stirring whilst bottling and warming, either the honey or the jars, and allowing them to cool slowly.

Finally, advice was given on Christmas gifts for the Apiarist as follows:

- 'Bee Keeping Study Notes' by Yates and Yates
- 'Keeping Bees and Marketing Honey'
- 'The Buzz about Bees' J Tautz
- 'Guide to Bees & Honey' Ted Hooper

A visit to Finkley Down Farm Andover is recommended as a good way to walk off the Christmas excesses.

The meeting concluded with tea/coffee and biscuits and a vote of thanks to the panel.

## **TREASURER**

We are pleased to report that Matt Avery has kindly offered to take on the role of Honorary Treasurer and has been co-opted into that role with immediate effect. To date the job has effectively included the role of Membership Secretary, but to spread the work more evenly this responsibility is now to be handled separately. Clarissa Lodge has kindly offered to take it on. She will be one of the two new committee members advertised for in the October Newsletter, so she too will be co-opted onto the committee.

The second new committee member sought in October has been found, Amanda Trigg. She will take on the role of Education Secretary. As such she will be the point of contact for members' BBKA Basic Assessment and Module exams and for educational activities with local schools and community groups.

## **AGM 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011 + Wine and Cheese!**

The above mentioned new co-opted committee members will be offered for formal election at the AGM in January.

## **HBA CONVENTION & HONEY SHOW**

HBA provided yet another thoroughly worthwhile and enjoyable day at Barton Peverill College. It comprised two excellent speakers in the morning and a variety of interesting and useful workshops in the afternoon. A simple but very acceptable hot lunch was included, after which the Honey Show opened revealing a high standard of entries in the wide variety of classes. A full report will no doubt be included in the next issue of Hampshire Bee Talk. Meanwhile, the Ellison family are to be congratulated on successfully flying the WDBKA flag by winning five prizes! Ten year old Jemma won a 1<sup>st</sup> for her computer generated picture related to beekeeping and a 2<sup>nd</sup> for her painting, Charlotte (12) did similarly well with her painting and dad Tim was awarded a 4<sup>th</sup> place for his fudge and 2<sup>nd</sup> for his photo "of a humorous nature" relating to beekeeping. Well done to all!

## **SEASONAL ADVICE**

Ray Gorman reports on a conversation he had with a beekeeper friend from York:

"One final thing that should be on your radar, dosing with 3.2% oxalic acid in a 1:1 sugar syrup at 5ml per seam of bees, applied early January or traditionally, for many beekeepers, over the xmas break whilst administering sloe gin to said beekeeper at the same time (winter varroa treatment, probably the most effective and vital treatment for anything, all year!)"