



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2011

BOB's BIT

As my old friend Omar put it,

“Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires”.

What can the thoughtful bee-keeper do at this time of year and in this weather? Here are some suggestions:

1. Sit by the fire and worry if the bees are warm enough
2. Scan the skies for woodpeckers.
3. Read entertaining bee books with paragraph beginnings such as “find and cage the queen...” or “this trait can be bred out in a couple of generations”
4. More usefully, clean off a dozen frames and fit new foundation. By the twelfth, you will have a better concept of infinity.
5. Make a drink, any drink, that combines honey with alcohol, and drink to the prosperity of your bees and confusion to the Queen's enemies.

I have not seen a bee flying for over a week, but the volume of cappings and other rubbish on the ground under my hives is an indicator of life of some sort. Another advantage of screen floors is that there is no urgency to keep the entrances free of snow, there will be enough air coming through the floor. All I want in the next four weeks is a mild day when I can apply the Oxalic acid treatment. 10°C is accepted as the lowest temperature at which the cluster will reform after a disturbance. If there is winter rape nearby, it may be worthwhile to make some pollen substitute (recipes on the web) and lay it on top of

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday January 11th
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. The changes will enable us to manage our larger membership efficiently, and further to improve the education and training we provide to members and to the wider community as required by with the Association's charitable status.

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

We look forward to seeing you there.

the brood frames. (The designer of the National hive who decreed bottom bee-space has a lot to answer for.) And of course a little spring feeding with weak syrup will do no harm, and save the bees having to go out to fetch water.

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 Jambalaya with garlic bread and green salad, then a choice of apricot and

almond tart or treacle tart, with cream. The evening was rounded off with tea or coffee and another of Bob's intriguing quizzes.



Amanda entering into the festive spirit!



George, Trish and Chris cracking the quiz.

A big 'thank you' to Angela and her many helpers for all their hard work and to Astra for the super supper. It was a most successful and enjoyable occasion.

BBKA MODULE EXAMINATIONS - 2010

The Basic Assessment is the minimum measure of beekeeping capability. If you have been beekeeping for a year or more, you will probably know most of what is required already. It comprises an hour of practical working with a colony, with an experienced beekeeper Assessor, who teaches as much as tests. On a fine spring or summer's day it is an enjoyable as well as informative experience. Register your interest

now with Amanda Trigg:
(atrigg@waitrose.com).

The closing date for entry to the Module Exams (not for the Basic Assessments) is February 10th. The exams are to be held on 19th March.

For more information see the BBKA web site (www.britishbee.co.uk).

MICROSCOPY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Back in October we reported that the Association had been awarded a 'Grass Roots' grant from Hampshire County Council. This is to assist us with our educational activities, particularly those involving the local community. We have now purchased the items which we listed in our grant application, as follows:

- Adult and junior size bee suits to enable us to give 'hands on' experience to non-beekeepers.
- Additional items for our virtual hive to make a complete simulated hive.
- A National observation hive to complement our existing Langstroth hive.
- Laptop, digital projector and screen.
- Microscopes (1 stereo for dissecting and 1 high power to x1000), plus a digital minicam and dissecting and pollen identification kits.

The last items enable us to set up a Microscopy Special Interest Group. This group will be able to assist members in, for example, investigating unexplained colony losses and in pollen identification. The minicam connected to the new laptop and projector will enable the equipment to be used to support talks and demonstrations, both within the Association and to external organisations such as schools, scout groups and WIs.

Members who are interested in using this equipment and participating in the Microscopy Group, please contact Clarissa Lodge as follows:-
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