



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk (Ctrl + click to link)
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NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2011

BOB's BIT

"Britain", said Bill Bryson, "is like living in a Tupperware box". The last month has illustrated just what he meant, with only one day when my little charges ventured out in the sun with any enthusiasm. I managed to apply my oxalic acid on a day when the thermometer clambered up to 12°C, but it was not appreciated.

Now here's something interesting. I had treated with Bayvarol in September, and got a fair mite fall, but expected a lot more after the oxalic acid. In fact I got very little, which suggests that pyrethroid-immunity in/ these parts is not very high. Contrary to the doom-sayers. Now one hive does not a sample make, any more than does the odd swallow make summer.

And that's another thing. Apart from an unwelcome woodpecker, the bird life around here is noticeably scarce. A blackbird came to talk to me while I was dunging the raspberries, the first I'd seen this year. What does this presage for the coming year? Not a croak from the crocuses, when they should be half over. Where is the pollen coming from? (I can't find that fat-free soya flour).

With our new microscope we will be able to look at pollen, which is very very small, and tell you where it came from. And after a diet of Holby and Casualty, you will have no qualms about dissecting bees and exclaiming "coryopsis has set in" or other learned remarks.

You probably know that BBKA has its sights on the neo-nicotinoid pesticides as a suspect in the CCD debate. You may also recall that these substances, made by Bayer, were banned in France. I do not think there was any evidence but what the hell, *Epatiez les Allemands* I say.

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday February 8th
7.30 pm at Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Nigel Semmence our Regional Bee Inspector will be talking to us about one of his particular interests:

'Solitary Bees'

Keep hefting those hives, the winter of your discontent is nearly over.

AGM Tuesday 11th January

The turn-out of 33 was a record for an AGM in recent years. The meeting was given an overview of our beekeeping year by the Chairman.

It had been successful both in increasing membership and in beekeeping terms. Losses had been kept as last year, there had been plenty of swarms during the spring and early summer, there had been no notifiable diseases among members' colonies and we had been awarded a 'Grass Roots' grant by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation. Hugh thanked the committee for all their efforts and in particular gave an appreciation of Robin Leonard as "a tower of strength" over more than thirty years as Treasurer.

In giving the Secretary's report Angela observed how busy the enquiries line had been during the early part of the year, particularly due to the 'Beekeeping for Absolute Beginners' course. Her task had been made much easier by Stephen who she felt had "drawn the short straw!" in taking on the role of Programme Secretary.

Angela thanked the rest of the committee for making her task easier and all those who had helped with the organisation of meetings, and in particular members who had generously hosted apiary meetings. Her report of the Association's many activities over the year was illustrated with a PowerPoint presentation.



Angela with Maggie Shelton.

New Treasurer Matt's report on the Association's finances showed a very healthy surplus. This was in large measure due the Association's newly acquired charitable status and the consequent ability to recover Gift Aid on subscriptions. In view of the healthy position Matt advised that there was no need to raise the subscription rate.

The Chairman gave a brief overview of the Association's Rules, highlighting a few areas where they would be updated over the coming year.

The new committee were all formally elected/re-elected, including Clarissa Lodge as Membership Secretary and Amanda Trigg as Education Secretary. While Malcolm Rittman and Tim Ellison had stood down as voting members of the committee, their expertise, for which they were thanked by the Chairman, will still be retained as co-opted (non-voting) members.

The Association's equipment available for use by members, is now listed on the Association's web site. Its present location and keeper can be found via the members area. Members wishing to use the equipment should contact the current holder. There will be no hire charges for use of the equipment this year.

Stephen Tompsett reported that he now has a full programme for the coming year, which will be published in the near future.

SUBSCRIPTIONS!

Membership renewal for the coming year is now due, and renewal forms are being sent out with this Newsletter. Please be sure to complete the forms and return them to Clarissa with your payment **right away, and in any event no later than 28th February.**

BBKA MODULES/BASIC ASSESSMENT REMINDER, from Amanda Trigg

If you are taking a **module** this year the closing date for entry is **February 10th** with the exam to follow on **19th March**. Application forms and money need to be sent to the Hampshire secretary. Would anyone doing this please let me know too.

I am collecting names of those thinking of doing the **Basic Assessment** this year. When I have a group of interested people then we can have a get together to go through what is expected to achieve the standard. We also need to coordinate the 'where and when'. The BBKA is keen that all beekeepers take the Basic Assessment – you need to have kept bees for at least a year but there is no upper limit on the number of years you've been at it! Please contact me atrigg@waitrose.com or have a chat at the next meeting if you'd like to find out more.

MICROSCOPY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Members who are interested in using our stereo and high power microscopes and dissecting equipment and participating in the Microscopy Group, please contact Clarissa Lodge as follows.

clarissa.lodge@googlemail.com
01962 779302

BEEBASE

If you (and your bees) are not already registered on the National Bee Unit (NBU) 'BeeBase', please do so as soon as possible via the NBU web site - www.nationalbeeunit.com.

In addition to valuable news and information on the web site, you will also receive important and authoritative advice by e-mail on, for example, caring for your bees during the critical winter months, in particular February.