



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Secretary: Angela Forder-Stent 01962 861176  
Hon Treasurer: Matt Avery, 01962 856423  
Newsletter Editor: Russell Fairchild 01962 852333  
[www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk) (Ctrl + click to link)  
President: Ron Broadway  
Chairman: Hugh Sykes

## NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2011

### BOB's BIT

Any sheep-farmer will tell you that his stock are both skilled and determined to kill themselves in ways worthy of the Darwin Award. Getting hung up in fences or leaping to their death are par for the course. Bees, one would hope, are above such behaviour, but I can offer some evidence to the contrary.

Following my "Beekeeping Study Notes" (Yates), I put out a shallow dish of clean water, in the sun, sloped so that they could walk down to the water's edge. In no time they were like so many lemmings, drowning determinedly. Stones in the water, guard rails and warning signs "Deep Water" had no effect. My solution is to fill the dish with moss, or lay on some sacking.

The next task is to train the bees to use this source, rather than the pond by your patio. I found the wash-water from my cleaning out of ivy honey was effective, and should train the new generation of water-gatherers along the right path. I once had a call from a lady to say that bees were drinking from her hot-tub. My suggestion that she wear a veil while in the tub went down badly.

It is still vital - if not more so - to keep hefting your hives, for now is the time of greatest consumption. It does no harm to put a jar of syrup on a colony, and if they don't want it they will ignore it. I tried it on the lightest of mine, and they politely sipped half a jar but no more.

Leafing through back numbers of the Newsletter, I found in the issue for March 1814 that the Itchen was still frozen, and there had been a Frost Fair on the Thames. Members were greatly feared for their bees, and gloomily forecast a Bad Year. Casks of smuggled French honey were taken by the Revenue at Beaulieu instead of the usual brandy, and it was all blamed on Napoleon (of course).

**APIARY MEETING**  
**Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**[Association apiary] and afterwards at**  
**[Bob Geary's house]**

*Directions: [ Please get details from secretary]*

**MEETING Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March**  
**Andy Willis – 'Trials and Tribulations'**



More than thirty members were entertained by Andy's excellent and beautifully illustrated talk based on his thirty years of beekeeping. The issues addressed ranged from the poor nectar quality of modern

varieties of rape, through the high ambient temperatures (27degs plus) needed for nectar flow in sunflowers, the weather-critical nature of white clover and the high productivity of urban bees.

Andy emphasised the importance of rigorous Varroa management. He strongly advocated using the 'Shook Swarm' method, even though this means sacrificing brood - the 'bounce back' is "phenomenal".

## **BEEKEEPING FOR ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS. Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March**

St Albans, Clapham, Oxford, Chichester, Isle of Wight - just a few of the places from which the visitors came to our one day 'taster' course. It was a great success thanks to the excellent organisation (including cream tea!) by Tim Ellison and his family.

## **MICROSCOPY**

Tim kindly took a weekend out to attend a course on dissection/disease recognition and pollen identification at Dartford. It was part funded by NBU/FERA, and the rest by WDBKA. Tim will be passing on the knowledge gained to the other members of the microscopy group.

## **'SCIENCE IN THE GARDEN' at INTECH 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> April**

More volunteers please, to help with this event, particularly on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April, but also Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> a.m.. If you can spare two or three hours to help, please contact Russell at: [russell.fairchild@virgin.net](mailto:russell.fairchild@virgin.net)

## **SWARM LIST**

People can now put themselves on the Swarm List via our website: [www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk). Look under 'Bees/Swarms' and click on the link at the bottom of the 'Swarms' page.

## **BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT REMINDER**

We would still like to have more entries to take the Basic Assessment test this Spring and Summer. Please contact Amanda Trigg to book a place:- [atrigg@waitrose.com](mailto:atrigg@waitrose.com)

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

These are now well overdue. If you have not renewed you will be dropped from the WDBKA distribution list and this will be your last Newsletter.

## **INTEGRATED VARROA MANAGEMENT DAY. Lyndhurst.** From Amanda Trigg.

Over a hundred beekeepers gathered at Lyndhurst Community Centre on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The day was organised by New Forest BKA.

Nigel Semmence, (RBI) started the day with a lecture on "Know Your Enemy". He outlined the damage that the varroa mite can do, their life cycle, rate of development, and strategies to deal with them. The remainder of the day comprised workshops:

**Monitoring methods - Fraser Young** who emphasised the importance of monitoring at least four times each season and ways to make the counting and calculations more accurate.

**Chemical Controls - Kevin Pope** who outlined all available chemical treatments without recommending one alone. Also the importance of keeping a record of what, when and how any treatment is carried out - this is a legal requirement we discovered!

**Husbandry Techniques - Robert Carpenter Turner** who covered drone brood removal, queen trapping, the artificial swarm and shook swarm.

Nigel concluded the day with good news: there are new products to treat varroa in development, so more choice will be available in 6-12 months; and the bad news: new dangers are on the horizon in the form of Small Hive Beetle, Tropilealaps and the Asian and Oriental Hornet. The messages of the day were: we cannot ignore the varroa mite or any other problem in our hives; and the importance of good apiary practice.

## **MEON VALLEY BKA AUCTION Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May, The Village Hall, Greatham, Nr Liss.**

Starting at 1.00 p.m. sharp. Viewing from 11.30 a.m.

The opportunity to sell equipment you no longer use and to buy bees and good (if you are discerning!) second hand items.

Details from James Laybourne 01489 892853 or [jamesdeb12@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jamesdeb12@tiscali.co.uk).