



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2011

BOB's BIT

To Chelsea, in quest of anything pertaining to bees. Spying a National hive on a college stand, I was about to quiz the attendant when he lifted the lid and took out more literature. He said it was very useful, and was surprised that anyone would want to put bees in it. And that was the apogee of my quest, so I went and talked to a man about cocoa beans which, I learned, have to be fermented after picking. It makes the honey harvest seem simple.

My spring crop is safely in, not without some hard graft. Ian Homer, our former Regional Bee Inspector, once spoke of his "Eureka Moment" when he found that if you grease the mating surfaces of your hive, then the bees will not glue them together. I followed his advice, and found it to be true. Now I find that bending over a hive while inspecting it makes my back ache. So I made my hive stands tall enough that the top of the brood box is about waist-high. This is good, but when handling the third super at chin height, the greased surfaces make it possible to slide the box across rather than lift it. You can't do THAT with a National.

The nature of the honey is unusual, considering that it came from the rape field at the roundabout up on The Hill. Normally, I would expect that it would be setting faster than a man with a bee in his trousers but no, its quite clear, clear enough to show up the bee's legs and assorted detritus. "It is a mark of provenance" I assured one customer, "it shows it is Real Honey".

Bill Turnbull, writing in that August journal Waitrose Weekend, claimed that a bee's life work amounts to but a teaspoonful of honey. Why then does it smear it on every doorknob in the house? Bro. Adam would have bred that out of his bees in a couple of generations.

APIARY MEETING **Saturday 18th June** **With George Hand and his bees**

Address and directions are available from the Secretary, and are printed in the newsletter

Parking will be difficult so car sharing is strongly recommended.

APIARY MEETING Saturday 14^h May

Thirty five members and visitors came to see and hear RBI Nigel Semmence demonstrate aspects of swarm management. However, Malcolm's bees had ideas of their own and had already taken advantage of the exceptionally warm weather. They had decided they weren't going to wait to be 'managed' and had already swarmed.

So 'Plan B' was invoked for the morning session - a comprehensive demonstration of "good apiary practice". This included the importance of apiary and hive hygiene, including frame changing and watching for signs of the more common diseases such as Nosema and Acarine, poisoning and Varroa infestation. The bees were all in good health.

After a pleasant picnic lunch in the sunshine, with much bee chat, the afternoon session comprised an authoritative illustrated talk on brood diseases, including demonstration of the sight, smell and diagnosis of the foul broods, in particular EFB.



That's EFB!

It was a highly informative and enjoyable day. We had not only been given a master class in many of the most important aspects of beekeeping, but also plied with a never ending supply of tea, coffee, soft drinks and Margaret's super home-made biscuits and flapjacks. It's a tough life!

BEE BASE

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 receive important and authoritative advice by e-mail on caring for your bees and information on any local disease outbreaks.

CITY MILL BREAD & HONEY WEEKEND 11th & 12th June

Ron Broadway still needs a few more volunteers to help with this event, especially on Sunday 12th June. If you can spare an hour or two, call him on 01962 865680 or e-mail to:

Ronald.broadway@btinternet.com

**RADIO 4 GQT GARDEN PARTY
Saturday 2nd July**

Volunteers are needed to help with our stand at the Gardeners Question Time Garden Party at Sparsholt on the 2nd July. We need 5 or 6 people morning and/or afternoon to help set up and man the stand and talk to visitors.

No detailed knowledge is needed but a mixture of newcomers and experienced members would be good. Free entry and lunch pack provided.

Contact Hugh Sykes at: barandhugh@aol.com

MEON VALLEY BKA AUCTION Saturday 7th May



The sun shone and the forecast showers held off, but the numbers attending were down this year. Prices were generally lower as well. Five frame nuclei in returnable boxes were selling at around £100.

BEES AVAILABLE

Clarissa Lodge has more colonies than she needs. They are in jumbo Langstroths. If you could use another colony or two, please call Clarissa on 01962 779302.

FOR SALE.

A couple of 5 gallon brew bins to anyone who has a bountiful harvest! Contact Bob: 01962 860396