



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Secretary: Angela Forder-Stent 01962 712443
Hon Treasurer: Matt Avery, 01962 856423
Newsletter Editor: Russell Fairchild 01962 852333
www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk (Ctrl + click to link)
President: Ron Broadway
Chairman: Hugh Sykes

NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2011

BOB's BIT

I have often queried the role of wasps in the Great Plan, but now with humility I have to make my confession. They are very good at cleaning up. Anything. If a wasp can get its teeth into something then it will be removed as quickly as lead off a church roof. They are not perfect; our dog would not lick up mustard, so we had to wash the plates anyway, and wasps are not interested in pollen. But otherwise they will remove remnants of solidified honey and wax-moth grubs with equal efficiency. I stack my cleared supers and leave everyone to help themselves. Bees come in and sniff about, dreaming of harvests gone by, but the wasps roll up their sleeves and carry off anything at all (except pollen).

I have a garden chair by the hives, where I can sit and watch my bees. It is always a pleasure to watch others at work, I think it was Mark Twain who said he was so fond of it that he could watch it for hours, and Ford Madox Brown's "Work" is such a complete picture of the subject that it comes with footnotes. But there is much to learn from this pastime, from the gladsome sight of pollen being brought in to noting the shifty approach of would-be robbers.

Last week, at a street market in Dieppe, I spoke to a local *apiculteur* about his harvest, which he reckoned to be good. He sold his honey in 500g tubs, which after translating into pounds sterling and avoirdupois, was less than £3 a pound. So I smuggled a pot home (did you know that importing honey or fresh meat is a crime?). It is dark and strong, a bit like the dreaded Manuka. If you are travelling in the south of France, look out for my favourite, Miel de Garrigue. It is a glorious mixture of thyme, asphodel and lavender, and has "une bonne teneur en oligoéléments". I could not have put it better myself.

EVENING MEETING
Tuesday October 11th @ 7.30 p.m.
Itchen Abbas Village Hall

'The Basic Assessment'
With David Nield and Russell Fairchild

For all members who have not taken the Basic Assessment. Please try to be there. David and Russell will provide an overview of what is involved and how on your assessment day you will have an informative and enjoyable hour with a Master Beekeeper.

APIARY MEETING on 10th September with Clarissa Lodge at Itchen Stoke.

The weather forecast for the day was very depressing, as was the weather itself when we were assembling at Manor Farm. However, optimism prevailed and we set off up the track to Clarissa's out apiary. There we found eight hives (Langstroths plus one National) and Clarissa's husband Tim and son George, ready to guide us.

The twenty five of us divided into three groups led by George, Hugh and Bob. George (Lodge) demonstrated the progress he was making with uniting two nuclei, while the groups led by Hugh and Bob checked other colonies for diseases and adequacy of stores for the forthcoming winter. One was found to be a bit light on stores and therefore in need of feeding, and few bald brood were spotted in others, but nothing to cause concern. Bob also demonstrated checking drone brood for Varroa mites with an uncapping fork.

During all this activity, in spite of the pessimistic outlook, the sun came out and we were rewarded with a beautiful summer afternoon. In due course we made our way back to 'The Shallows' where we indulged in tea, chocolate biscuits and shortbread, and loads of bee chat. It had been an excellent meeting with which to end the outdoor season, and many thanks are due to the Lodge family for their hospitality and allowing us to invade some of their many colonies.



Christine Ray, Trish Bright and John Martin discuss bee problems, while the sun shines brightly outside.

HBA CONVENTION AND HONEY SHOW Saturday 12th November - HELP PLEASE!

Volunteers are still needed to help with setting up on the Friday evening and stewarding on the day. Please contact Janice Roper Conference Organizer Janice Roper, by e-mail at jan.roper@rya-online.net or, by 'phone on 02380 845875, if you can help.

On the day the excellent speakers will comprise:

Celia Davis, will be extolling the virtues of 'Mr Bee'.
Mike Brown of the NBU will be updating us on the latest in bee research.
Joy Wallis will give us ideas for creating bee-friendly gardens.

There will be workshops on **simple queen rearing, bee-product cosmetics, reading the bees, and encouraging solitary bees.**

A hot lunch, morning coffee and afternoon tea are included and trade stands will be open throughout the day. Gardener and bee-enthusiast **Charlie Dimmock** will view the Honey Show and present the prizes.

For all who would like to enter the show but are daunted by the competition, there are a number of new Novice classes. Give Charlie something to admire and the judges some work to do; as you take your harvest put some honey or a 'perfect' frame aside for the show.

This annual event really does provide a highly enjoyable day out that is not to be missed. At £11 in advance or £13 on the door, all inclusive, it's a bargain. Tickets are now available from Angela (Forder-Stent) who will be at our meeting at Itchin Abbas on 11th October.

For full details of the Convention programme and Honey Show go to:

www.hampshirebeekeepers.org.uk/events/hba-autumn-convention

MERIDIAN BEEKEEPERS' OPEN LECTURE

Thursday 20th October 7.15 for 7.30 p.m at The Roman Catholic Church Hall, off Victoria Road, Bishops Waltham

Ron Hoskins will talk about his research into breeding Varroa resistant bees, that has arisen from his work on the Swindon Bee.

Tickets £5 at the door including finger buffet and a glass of wine.

Let Nina Jetten know if you might be attending:
Nina.jetten@btinternet.com or 02380 767956

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Ray Gorman unfortunately has to give up beekeeping for health reasons, so all his bee equipment must be sold. Some of it is already on Bid4Bees site, but there is still a lot more available if people are interested. This includes extractor, settling tanks, National supers and brood boxes, hand equipment etc. Also some bee suits and three colonies (although there are already bids on these). All the colonies have been recently inspected by Nigel Semmence (RBI) who gave them a clear bill of health.

If you might be interested, contact Ray by e-mail: ray.gorman@btopenworld.com or phone him on: 07802394580 or 01962 880525.