



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2012

### BOB's BIT

By the time this newsletter hits the street it will be a new year, entitling us to make improbable resolutions about how we will conduct our bee-keeping in future. Mine will be to be more strict in observing 7-day inspections. I would prefer to *reduce* the number of stocks, not have nature following its expansion program. But being ready to do an artificial swarm means having a ready-equipped brood box, (or two). At present, the prospect of standing at my bench in the garage, fitting out brood frames, is not very attractive. Foundation is easier to slot in when cold, but not *that* cold.

Looking back at my Bit for Decembers past (yes, I do keep this tripe) it is clear that while other countries have climate, we just have weather. The present mild spell is statistically fairly normal, just a bit wetter. The bees seem to take it in their stride, after all they have been coping with it far longer than we have. It used to be the custom to ascribe national characteristics to different strains of *Apis Mellifera*, with fat, yellow, fecund but idle Italians, only productive when it's warm. But now it is the native British Black that is being praised for its hardiness and work ethic, though pure-bred ones must be rare. What will folklore say of the French bees in years to come? Chauvinist, intolerant of Islamic attire and yielding de-rated honey? Or German bees, doing all the work and complaining about it?

It was so warm yesterday that I opened my hives and, with a mere waft of smoke and a squirt of sugar-water, was able to administer their oxalic acid. One stock, which produced a near-zero

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Tuesday January 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**7.30 pm at Itchen Abbas Village Hall**

**AGM – with Cheese and Wine**

This will provide a relaxed start to the New Year.

The formal business will be dealt with swiftly, including a brief resume of the past year's activities and a preview of the coming year's programme, so that we can get on with the important social aspects of the occasion!

We look forward to seeing you there.

natural mite drop, yielded 80+ for the next two days. So natural drop is not the definitive measure of infestation..

The hives on the hill had not been greased-up in September, and oh what a difference it made. An old table-knife was a great help, and the bees were really very decent about it. I put a carpet square on each crown-board as a reward.

**CHRISTMAS SUPPER AND QUIZ**  
**Tuesday December 13th**

Alfred's hot *gluhwein* provided a welcome and appropriate start to our evening, followed by Astra's delicious hot game pie with baked potatoes *a la* Tompsett, garlic bread and green

salad. The herbivores enjoyed a delicious cheese and salad roulade. Either (or both!) were followed by a dessert of apricot tart and cream. The evening was accompanied by wines as required, and rounded off with tea or coffee while we racked our brains over one of Bob's tantalizingly tricky quizzes.



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

## EDUCATION MATTERS

From Amanda Trigg

Anyone thinking of doing **Beekeeping Modules** (1,2,5,or7) needs to have their application form and payment to me well before February 10<sup>th</sup> so that I can process it and pass it on to the Hampshire Education Secretary by that date.

I have about 11 people interested in doing the **Basic Assessment** this year. To that end I have made a booking at Itchen Abbas village hall for two Tuesday evenings - 28<sup>th</sup> February and 27<sup>th</sup> March. This will give us a chance to look through the syllabus and find out more about expectations for passing the assessment. Please let me know if

you want to join that group or are thinking of entering for the Basic Assessment this year.

The closing date for applications for the **General or Advanced Certificate of Beekeeping** is 28<sup>th</sup> February. Details are on the BBKA website and applications need to come via myself.

**Beekeeping Talks.** From time to time approaches are made to individual members of the association, or via the secretary, for a speaker on beekeeping. We are keen to collect a list of people willing to give such a talk and the age group (children or adults) you might feel happiest talking to. Please let me know.

**Resources.** We have added to our resources this past year and have a number of posters and a portable display board which can be used to support talks and events.

Amanda Trigg. [atrigg@waitrose.com](mailto:atrigg@waitrose.com) or 01962 852279.

## DON'T FORGET...

The next evening meeting at Itchen Abbas on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Robin Dean will be talking on 'Pesticides and Bees'. Be sure that it is in your 2012 diary.

## BFAB

If you have a friend or relative who might be interested in beekeeping but isn't sure what it might involve, tell them about WDBKA's one day 'Beekeeping For Absolute Beginners' course, Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Or give it to them for a birthday present! Details can be found on the WDBKA web site: [www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk) then click on 'Courses'.