



WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2012

BOB's BIT

Its a hard life, being a Pharaoh. Apart from knocking up pyramids, there is the matter of the bees. The tears of the sun god RA, falling on the desert sand, turn into bees, which means that you must keep a sad face in the temple, as well as wearing a pointy hat. Temples such as Karnak are full of bee reliefs, as are those at Knossos. So our little friends have not only been around for a very long time, they have mixed with the movers and shakers of the ancient world. The Greeks associated lips anointed with honey with the gift of eloquence. The present-day Greek government must be shifting a few kilos, while Pythagoras was reputedly reared on honey, which would account for the square on his hypotenuse.

I have just potted-up a bucket of (I think) late crop, which is particularly floral in flavour. The label had come off, so we'll never know its provenance. But on toast it tastes quite different. I have been a show steward, and noticed that judges scoop up a sample and smear it on the back of their hand before licking it off. Should they be provided with soldiers of white toast for sampling? I do not willfully smear honey on any part of *my* hands, it gets there of its own.

The mild weather continues, and I have found bright orange pollen on my droppings board. Either its the snowdrops or the crocuses (croci?) that are supplying it, but either way I take it as a sign of provisional queen-rightness.

A member was telling me of a problem with a damp hive, and proposed the "matchsticks under the crown board" solution. Mine would propolise

NEXT MEETING
Tuesday February 14th
7.30 pm at Itchen Abbas Village Hall

Robin Dean, Commercial Beekeeper, will talk about - 'Pesticides and Bees'

Association library books will again be on sale at the meeting. The list of books available will be sent out in parallel with this Newsletter.

that to hell, and leave a mess to clean off. I would put an eke or empty super on top, assuming there was a hole or two in the crown board, and then the roof. The condensation will occur in the eke, which is colder, and easier to remove later in the spring. Don't forget to grease all the edges, and keep hefting those hives.

A VERY CONVIVIAL AGM **10th January 2012**

The serious business was all complete by 8.15 p.m. this left plenty of time for the thirty or so members present to enjoy the wine (and award winning mead) and assortment of cheese and biscuits provided, and to exchange anecdotes and experiences.

Before the socialising, the meeting heard the Chairman's report of another generally successful beekeeping year. Winter losses were much improved, but honey yields were not so good. In her Secretary's report Angela, among other things thanked the committee and all those who had

helped during the year for their excellent support, and then with the aid of a slide show prepared by Russell, reviewed the year's activities. The Treasurer summarised the state of the Association's finances. The figures had been circulated ahead of the meeting and showed a very healthy financial position, such that it is again not necessary to raise the subscription charges for another year.

Those committee members and officers who were willing and able to continue on the committee were duly re-elected, but Malcolm Rittman stood down as he and Margaret will be leaving the area during the coming year. Russell Fairchild took up Malcolm's vacated slot as a delegate to the HBA, with Hugh Sykes. With our membership of about 100, WDBKA is eligible for another two delegates should any member be interested in finding out more about HBA's activities.

Amanda briefly summarised the progress with education activities during the year. These included the acquisition of some new portable display boards for posters and, most importantly, the prospect of many more members entering for the Basic Assessment in the coming year.

Tim Ellison brought the meeting up to date on the latest version of the on-line swarm co-ordination process, with a short presentation. The procedure is accessed through the WDBKA web site, via which members can add themselves to the Swarm List on a first come first served basis. Swarm enquiries from the public come in via the transferable swarm helpline, to the Duty Swarm Co-ordinator, who assesses whether they are actually honey bee swarms or, for example, bumble bees nests. The first available person on the swarm list is then contacted to arrange collection, with an experienced local helper if required.

Volunteers are required to act as Duty Swarm Co-ordinators for short periods, as are helpers who are prepared to give a hand to inexperienced members. Contact Tim Ellison via e-mail to: tim.ellison@winchesteekeepers.org.uk



The really serious business of the evening gets under way!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The time has come for renewing your membership of WDBKA and the necessary form is being sent out to you today. Please fill it in and return it to Clarissa with your payment as soon as possible. Ideally do it **today** (then you know it's done!) and you're all set for another enjoyable, and we hope honeyful, beekeeping year.

BFAB

There are still places available. 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 25th February 2012. Or give it to them as a present:- birthday, Mother's day or Father's day! Details can be found on the WDBKA web site: www.winchesterbeekeepers.org.uk then click on 'Courses'.

MVBKA AUCTION

The Meon Valley Beekeepers Association annual Auction is to be held this year on Saturday May 5th at Greatham Village Hall. Lots for sale are now welcome. For further information telephone Bruce Taylor on 01489 895428 or e-mail at: bruce.taylor@tiscali.co.uk