



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - JULY 2012

### BOB's BIT

The weather has been so awful that it has worn itself out as a topic of British conversation, but it remains a serious concern to bee-keepers. After days of rain, the first fine day brings out all the would-be swarms that have been chafing to go. New and old queens in uneasy cohabitation on a wet day would give you the plot for a domestic sitcom, or a whole screaming of Eastenders.

I visited a colony on Three Maids Hill, and was pleased to note that they were the most active on the site. Many other colonies were idling at home. Though their super was empty, there were nine frames of capped brood (14x12) which is potentially a lot of house bees to feed in the short term. It was only when closing up that I realised that none of the brood frames had any honey-arch, and were facing starvation. I hurried back with thin syrup. The problem on the hill is that even on sunny days the wind makes foraging hard work, and reduces the nett yield per trip.

If there is one subject to ruffle our normal domestic bliss, it is Propolis. With practiced cunning, the bees collect resinous substances with which to fashion a product which lurks on the workshop floor, defying my superannuated vacuum cleaner in order to lie in wait for a passing shoe. Hitching a ride, it then deposits on any floor surface where it will be noticed and execrated. An expired credit card is an effective, if tedious, method for removing it, so it is with pride that I bring you **Bee Nove!** Being of French origin, it claims to be "*desincrustant*" and that it will clean your "*gants et materials inox*". It contains potassium hydroxide, and will take the hide off a rhinoceros. But it really cleans my gloves.

### APIARY MEETING Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July @ 2.30 p.m.

With Trish Bright at  
Hookpit Farm, Kingsworthy

*Directions:* From the A33, take Lovedon Lane westwards into Kings Worthy. After about a mile pass the King Charles pub on to what then becomes the Stoke Charity Road, and straight up the hill round a Z bend, over a railway bridge, past some brick and flint cottages then take the first left. The apiary is at the first house on the left (Hookpit Farmhouse). There is a sign at the entrance to the lane advertising Knotts Vet & Kennels. Park on the verges on either side of this lane or in the yard by the barn a little further on.

### APIARY MEETING – 9<sup>th</sup> June



Fifteen members enjoyed a fine summer afternoon in Hugh and Barbara's lovely garden, inspecting six colonies, and then tea and biscuits.

The colonies, in jumbo Langstroth hives, comprised a two week old swarm with a very prolific queen, three frames of brood already and possibly looking to swarm!

Also, and of particular interest, was a colony created from three weak swarms collected and united last summer. This had developed very well. It showed the importance of uniting weak colonies in good time so that they will be sufficiently strong to not merely survive the winter, but to emerge as a strong and productive colony during the following spring. Hugh showed how to inspect its drone brood for Varroa mites, and then the queen was found and Hugh demonstrated how to mark her.

A big 'thank you' to Hugh and Barbara for their kind hospitality.

### **INTECH BEE DAYS on 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> June**



*A part of WDBKA's Intech Bee Day display area.*

In the picture, the candle rolling and honey tasting tables are out of shot to the right. Bob Geary, Amanda Trigg, Mike Lucas and Stephen Tompsett are all in action here, and Elizabeth Hill was at the same time coping with the almost continuous demand for candle rolling.

There was appalling weather, so we had a very busy two days at Intech. There were 970 visitors on the Wednesday, "which seemed enough" according to their Education Manager Angela Ryde-Weller, but on Thursday they had 1398, which she said was "amazing!"

Very many thanks to everyone who helped, especially those who stayed way beyond their allotted shift to help with the rush.

### **BEE BASE ALERTS**

During the month automatic alerts were received by people registered on BeeBase, providing advice and action you should take concerning starvation risk due to weather conditions and an outbreak of EFB in the south of our area. To be sure of receiving such alerts from the National Bee Unit (NBU), you and your bees must be registered on BeeBase. Arguably the simplest way of doing this is by Googling 'BeeBase' and following one of the links offered.

### **HEADS UP!**

**SEPTEMBER APIARY MEETING** - At 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September, with Avril Burt at South Wonston.

**HBA HONEY SHOW** - Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Hillier's Arboretum.

### **FUTURE PROGRAMME.**

Stephen Tompsett will soon be starting to put together the programme for 2013/2014. If anyone has any ideas for speakers or topics, or would be happy to host an apiary meeting next summer, please contact Stephen at: [stephentompsett@waitrose.com](mailto:stephentompsett@waitrose.com)

### **SKEP MAKING DAY**

Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup> 9.30am - 5.00pm, Warnford Village Hall, SO32 3LE

This skep making course will be lead by Martin Buckle, a beekeeper with over 30 years experience. To book your place, please send a cheque for £35 to Gill Atkins, 6 Victoria Road, BISHOPS WALTHAM, Hants, SO32 1DJ.

Contact Gill at [Gillian\\_atkins@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Gillian_atkins@tiscali.co.uk) or Jean Frost at [jeanterry@uwclub.net](mailto:jeanterry@uwclub.net)