



# WINCHESTER AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2012

### BOB's BIT

If you are bemoaning your honey crop, you are not alone. Having recently undertaken market research, travelling across Europe on your behalf, I can report that beekeepers everywhere are telling the same tales. French *apiculteurs* treated me to month-by-month accounts of what went wrong, which left me surprised that their honey was only €4.60 for 500g, or £3.34 a pound. Not the price of scarcity. And I'm willing to bet that no manuka or other imports are allowed.

At last my extracting is finished. It was a knock-down-drag-out affair, and I can see why in the sugar-beet industry the harvest is called "the campaign." Having, as I thought, cleaned up the workplace, I opened the window and invited my little friends to come in. In no time they found various drips, drops and spillages, and spent a couple of days showing me how to *really* clean up. It was most instructive, but I have no wish to copy their methods. I value my tongue too highly.

Now is the time to hunt out your mouse-guards, and finish feeding before the ivy flow. I caught a whiff of it around my hives at the weekend, and I want to have my supers cleaned up and removed before it starts in earnest. I still find writers who should know better saying that bees can't utilise ivy because it's too hard. Well, my experience is to the contrary, though there must be water available to dilute it. Which reminds me, if you have bees on the Association apiary, then take some water with you when you visit and top up the trough.

Lastly, remember the old enemy, and decide what to do to discomfit the varroa. I am going to try Apistan, and see what falls out. If it's bad then I'll use oxalic acid later in the autumn. Another pest to bother me was the greater wax moth, which invaded a defunct hive and filled it with woolly cocoons. What's worse, they actually eat into the woodwork.

### NEXT MEETING – BRAINS TRUST Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October Itchen Abbas Village Hall @ 7.30 p.m.

With guest expert David Purchase, Seasonal Bee Inspector (Retd.), Bob Geary and Angela Forder-Stent, with Russell Fairchild in the chair. After such a summer as we have just experienced, you must have many questions and issues you would like to discuss. **Please e-mail them to: [russell.fairchild@virgin.net](mailto:russell.fairchild@virgin.net) a.s.a.p, or telephone them to Russell on 01962 852333.**

### APIARY MEETING – 8<sup>th</sup> September

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity to explore a number of beekeeping situations at no less than four different apiaries. Avril Burt's, Clive and Janet Cunningham's plus Jane Offer's, and Mike and Mary Weller's. The day was perfect for beekeeping and each of the owners gave us a brief summary of their experiences and the behaviour of their colonies during this very peculiar summer.

Among the many questions discussed were whether or not to unite strong colonies with weak ones (and in what order)? whether or not to feed certain colonies and the pros and cons of different types of feeder? Whether to leave supers on over winter and whether they should be above or below the brood box, with or without the queen excluder?

We all ended up back at South Wonston Village Hall for tea and biscuits and a demonstration by Avril of the process of pollen identification using a centrifuge and high power microscope.



Many thanks to all our hosts for their hospitality and to Avril for all her work in organising the meeting.

## WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL HARVEST FESTIVAL 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> October

Winchester Cathedral hosts the Hampshire Harvest Festival on the first weekend of October each year. Angela could still use a few more volunteers to help with manning our stand. If you can spare an hour or two to help, please contact her a.s.a.p, either by e-mail at: [forederstent@talktalk.net](mailto:forederstent@talktalk.net) or by telephone on 01962 712443.

## MORE ABOUT HMF

From Theresa Waterworth of Pipers Honey

I have an enquiry once or twice a year from members of the public who ask me about honey being heated and how pure / good / bad etc this is. Whilst, as a commercial beekeeper it is tempting for me to reply that eating honey will make you irresistible to the opposite sex AND win you the lottery, my definitive reply has to be a scientific one derived from reference to Eva Crane's book of Honey, widely accepted as the industry's authority on everything to do with it. Below is a typical email on the subject and my reply:

*I have a question about honey that you may be able to answer. On another website I came across this statement made by a producer who does not produce clear honey, they said about the heating process used to clear honey "That is why their honey will stay clear on the supermarket shelf. If you heat honey above 45C it destroys the antioxidants, important enzymes, vitamins and other beneficial attributes."*

Reply: To truly buy any unheated honey it would have to be comb honey (with the wax) or something that claims it is cold pressed. When raw honey is extracted from the hive it contains bits of debris that the consumer does not want like bits of bee wing, bee leg or bits of wax.

Honey is stored after harvesting in this unfiltered raw state where it gradually granulates over the coming weeks after extraction. To remove the debris the honey is slowly heated to 49 degrees C so that it is hot enough to go through a filter. The resulting filtered product is then bottled as clear honey. Set or creamed honey also has heating in its processing.

As to whether the antioxidants, important enzymes vitamins and other attributes are destroyed is questionable. The honey will still contain the pollen which is a valuable source of iron and well known as an anti allergen. Whilst one can argue that heating honey is bad for it, the main components (a range of natural sugars) are (virtually) unchanged by it and the trace elements are so small as to not be nutritionally of any value to your RDA% unless you ate copious quantities on a daily basis. So honey is heated but this is the same for any food that we eat unless you want to eat all of your food raw. Heating has to be done to make the end honey product acceptable.

As to whether antioxidants & vitamins are destroyed by the heating is hard to say. It is known that Vitamin C is destroyed by heat, but honey, being 82% natural sugars, 17% water and less than 1% trace elements cannot be said to be a large source of vitamins and minerals essential for our well being. It is known to have good antibacterial qualities (Google the Honey Research Centre at The University of Waikato).

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

**HBA Honey Show** – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Hillier's Arboretum. For details, contact: [debbiethedog@tiscalli.co.uk](mailto:debbiethedog@tiscalli.co.uk) If you have any honey, confectionary, mead, wax or photographs, please enter as many classes as you can. Entry forms must be in by 6<sup>th</sup> October. Those who enter can sell their honey at the show, which this year is open to the public.

**NATIONAL HONEY SHOW** - 25<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> October at St Georges College, Weybridge, Surrey. For details, see: [www.nathoneyshow.eventbrite.com](http://www.nathoneyshow.eventbrite.com)

**WDBKA meeting** – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November at Itchen Abbas Village Hall. Ian Homer, our former RBI and now a member of the BBKA Executive, will talk about 'Requeening – Choice or Chance'.