

# BASINGSTOKE AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2009

Hello

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2009.

I hope the snow and ice has now all disappeared in your area. Recently my office transferred to Eastleigh and I have been quite interested to see and hear of the differing effects of the recent 'cold snap' along the M3 corridor. I have always worked with a group of people who travel some miles to work but now the distances have increased to sometimes well over 100 miles round trip. It would seem that even those who are normally more protected, usually those nearer to the coast, have encountered snow drifts so deep they could not open their back doors and black ice so thick that it took 3 days to melt. However as the weather warmed, after a couple of days, some areas were quite clear and some still completely snow bound.

As the weather warms up again the advice for beekeepers is to Heft the hives and check stocks as soon as possible.

I hope that you find your bees in fine fettle when you are able to see them. However should you need to replenish your hives do contact Eric or Jenny Denton if you would like to be contacted when a swarm is available and remember the importance of a 'health check' if you are purchasing bees.

Please take special note of WHO DOES WHAT this month as there have been several changes of responsibility after the AGM, minutes of which are attached to this newsletter.

I have included all contributions I have received, and any relevant information I can find. If you have any views as to items you would like included in future issues, or material for inclusion, please let me know 10 Milkingpen Lane, Basing, Basingstoke. Hants RG24 7DD.

Regards  
*Annabelle*

## Diary of Events

**In the Bothy at 7.30 p.m.**

19th Feb	Andy Willis Plants for Bees
19th March	Eric Denton Swarm gathering
16th April	Max Watkins from Vita Europe (Aiguard/Apistan)

**Any ideas for future speakers gratefully received.** Please contact either Yvonne or Laraine.

## MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARY

### THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE SPRING CONVENTION

WICKHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2009

10AM until 4PM

Hosted by Fareham & District, Portsmouth & District and  
Meon Valley Beekeeping  
Associations

### THE 2009 BRITISH BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION SPRING CONVENTION

This is a 3 day affair this year – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April, at the Royal Agricultural Society Showground at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. There will be the usual lectures, demonstrations and trade stands from home and abroad. – See the notices in the BBKA News February edition page 13.

## MONK SHERBOURNE FETE

(date to be confirmed – either Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> June)

Volunteers needed to man an Association stall, including an observation hive. Please contact David Coppock on 01256 468177 if you are able to help.

## Swarm Collecting

Eric and Jenny Denton will be co-ordinating the Swarm collecting this year. Please contact them as soon as possible to advise if you would like any swarms. You will need to be able to collect the swarm in person so you need to be available during the day and be able to provide a viable contact number as arrangements usually need to be made swiftly. Please also be prepared to report back to Eric and Jenny to confirm that you have attended, whether you have been successful or not.

**Reminder - Eric Denton Swarm Gathering 19<sup>th</sup> March in  
The Bothy 7.30pm**

### APIARY UPDATE

This winter has been reminiscent of winters during the early and mid-eighties when I started beekeeping in earnest.

It is likely now, as then, that colonies will be slow to get going because of reduced brood rearing during the cold weather. It is probable that brood rearing stopped altogether in some colonies.

Strong, well provisioned, colonies should overwinter well and make up for lost time when spring arrives. Smaller colonies and nucs may not fare so well because it is more difficult for them to maintain the necessary brood nest temperature. Sometimes, they starve because they fail to break cluster in cold weather and move to neighbouring frames containing food.

Now is the critical time for food reserves. I have been hefting my hives and the Association hives regularly. It has been necessary to feed two nucs, which were very light, probably because of limited storage space.

Little or no brood during the cold weather is good for varroa control because the mites have little or no opportunity to reproduce. Recent floor inserts in my colonies have shown very low mite counts, though I am far from complacent!

Although it is too soon to say how high this winter's losses will be, there is almost always a big demand for bees in the spring. If you buy established colonies or nucs from a reputable supplier, the risk of importing disease should be minimal. That may not be the case if you buy from a lesser-known source. Either way, for peace of mind, I would recommend the bees be given a health check before you part with your money.

Apiary meetings in St. John's Copse will be held at 2.00 pm on the first Saturday of each month from April until October: 4th April, 2nd May, 6th June, 4th July, 1st August, 5th September and 3rd October.

I am unable to offer precise weather criteria. My rule of thumb is that a meeting will be cancelled if it is raining persistently and/or the temperature is below 15C. If it is calm and sunny, it may be possible to go ahead down to about 12C. Similarly, we can dodge any showers if it is otherwise sunny. *However, if conditions are borderline, please 'phone me on 781288 before you leave home to avoid a possibly wasted journey.*

I am sure you will all join me in wishing for a much better season than we have experienced during the past two years. I look forward to seeing you at the apiary meetings.

David Purchase,  
Apiary Manager.  
16<sup>th</sup> February

## Honey bees work together to make group decisions

**Honey bees use a complex system of consulting one another before choosing a hive in a process London scientists say could help humans make better decisions.**

By Louise Gray, Environment Correspondent

Swarms send out groups of 'scout bees' to assess the quality of a potential site for a hive. The insects then report back and do a 'dance' to describe the benefits of the site.

The study found the swarm then comes to a group decision on the best site by revisiting sites recommended by others until a consensus emerges and all the bees are performing the same 'dance'.

Scientists say that the process could help the business world to come to more informed group decisions.

The study published in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B developed a computer model to measure the success of different decision-making processes.

The model showed that if the bees relied on the 'cosmic accident' of all the bees eventually stumbling on the same site, it leaves the swarm homeless and vulnerable.

On the other hand if the bees blindly following the recommendations of other bees without checking the sites out for themselves there is no guarantee that it will be the best decision.

The study concluded that the system bees use in nature of sending out scouting groups resulted in the best decision.

Professor Christian List, Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at The London School of Economics, said the bees natural decision-making process chose the best site.

"The honey bees' decision procedure is remarkably sophisticated," he said. "The swarm manages to block and prevent the kind of "group think" that can bedevil good decision making.

"Humans, for example, demonstrate this kind of bad decision making behaviour when a number of investors, through random accident, buy stock in a company and others rapidly join in with the crowd, thinking that the increased demand for the stock indicates something real. This can result in a market bubble, where the price of the stock goes through the roof for no good reason and often with bad consequences.

"Looking at decision making processes in both humans and animals is very important. The need for collective decision making occurs almost everywhere in complex societies, and a good fundamental understanding of these processes can help design human organisations in ways that encourage good decision making."

**Taken from the Telegraph February 12<sup>th</sup> 2009**

## **RECIPE**

### Nutty Orange Flapjacks

- 100g (4oz) Margarine
- 50g (2oz) Demerara Sugar
- 2 Tablespoons Runny Honey
- 3 175g (6oz) Rolled Oats
- 4 25g (1oz) Chopped Nuts
- 5 Finely gated zest and juice of an Orange
- 6 Icing Sugar

## **Classified Ads**

### **NUC'S FOR SALE**

#### **FOR SALE**

OVER-WINTERED NUC'S  
08 MARKED QUEENS  
GOOD TEMPER

Call IAN 07976 621 907

Heat the oven to 190°C, 375°F, Gas mark 5.  
Grease and 18cm (7-inch) square shallow tin.

Heat the margarine, sugar and Honey in a medium saucepan over a low heat and stir with a wooden spoon until melted. Remove from the heat and stir in the oats, nuts and orange zest.

Mix well and spoon into the tin, pressing Down lightly. Bake in oven for 25 minutes, leave to cool and cut into 6 big bars (very filling) or 12 smaller finger.

For topping using the orange juice and icing sugar make a thin icing and drizzle over the bars.

## AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

The Association has a motorised extractor for loan to members -

Please contact David Coppock if interested on 01256 468177

## WHO DOES WHAT

President	Charles Oliver-Bellasis	FRICS
Chairman	Eric Denton	01256 882244
Secretary	David Coppock	01256 468177
Treasurer	David Coppock	01256 468177
Membership	Chris Mouny	01256 329064
Apiary Manager	David Purchase	01256 781288
Asst. Apiary Manager	Jim Parkhouse	01256 323120
Swarm Co-ordinator	Eric & Jenny Denton	01256 882244
Newsletter	Annabelle Parkhouse	01256 323120
<b>Bulk Buy</b>	<b>VACANT</b>	
HBA Delegates	David Purchase	01256 781288
HBA Delegates	Chris Mouny	01256 329064
Spray Liaison	Chris Mouny	01256 329064
Committee Member	Nigel Winter	01256 892538
Committee Member		
Events	Yvonne Lucas	01256 330991
Events Assistant	Laraine Kuntze	01256 354508
Education/Training	David Purchase	01256 781288