



Southampton & District Bee Keepers Association

February 2010

Foragings

Newsletter

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Contributors this month

Tony Mabey

Andy Willis

Dates for the Diary

Committee meeting

Monday, February 15th – 19.30 hrs
Waterloo Arms

Listen to the Bees

A talk by John Hanks

Thursday, February 18th – 19.30 hrs
Chandlers Ford Golf Academy

A long standing member of Romsey Bee Keeping Association, John is a newly qualified Master Beekeeper and uses his wealth of knowledge and experience in his talk. He is also the examiner for the basic exam in Hampshire and editor of the Hampshire Bee Talk magazine for the past 7 years.

South Hampshire Spring Beekeeping Convention

Saturday, March 13th 2010 – 09.45 to 16.00 hrs
Dame Judith Professional Centre

Sundridge Close, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 3JL

Advance tickets at £10 are available from our Chairman, Dave Norris. Or from the convention organiser Dave Nield on 023 9238 6182.

Purifying & maximising your Wax Crop

A talk by Andy Willis

Thursday, March 18th 2010 – 19.30 hrs

Venue to be arranged

Andy is a member of our association and has developed this method over his many years in beekeeping. He breaks down this process into simple steps so that any beekeeper can get the best quality and maximise their wax harvest at the same time.

PESTS & DISEASE

In line with the CSL guidelines the Varroa count for February

Level and Control Required	Average Mite Drop per Day	Proportion of Infested Drone Pupae
Low No Action	2 or less	
Medium Plan Action	Between 2 and 7	
High Take Action	More than 7	

Woodpecker's, love 'em or hate 'em

By Andy Willis, photo by Tony Mabey

The recent cold winter weather which brought most of the country to a halt has also been hard on wildlife. Woodpeckers under such conditions look upon our hives as a good source of food. The damage that they do is to the woodwork, but some comb can be damaged too.

In my experience the real damage to the colony is that the hive is no longer weather tight and rodent proof. A woodpecker hole in the boxes acts as a good entrance for rats and mice. It is these that chew through many combs and bees and what isn't eaten is soiled. Under these circumstances all the frames and comb will have to be destroyed for hygienic reasons. It is therefore very important to do regular winter checks on the apiary to ensure that hives are still weather tight, and replace or repair any woodpecker damage as soon as it occurs.

Woodpecker damage to hives is a learnt behaviour. So once it occurs in an area, it will continue to happen. The only way to stop it from

happening again is to protect the boxes with wire mesh. Some people have wrapped stiff plastic around hives to stop the woodpecker getting a foot hold. This is ok but if the plastic gets loose in a gale it can flap and bang against the hive, much to the annoyance of the bees, putting unnecessary stress on the colony. Chicken wire mesh wrapped loosely around the hive usually works as a deterrent, but don't wrap it too tightly or the woodpeckers will be able to peck through the mesh onto the hive.



A hive at the Watermill Apiary

In the past woodpeckers became a problem at the Lea Lane Nursling apiary, some of the worst damage done to my hives during the winter

of 2003/4 while I was in hospital for 3 months, unable to do my normal checks or repairs. Both of my colonies survived the attack, but the entire comb was ruined by mice. The brood was protected by the queen excluder allowing the colonies to survive, but did not stop the smell or debris falling down from the affected supers above.

Indeed the mice took up residence with 'under paw' central heating supplied by the bees winter cluster and comb for food and were still in place when Mark and I evicted them in early April. The boxes and crown board that were repairable, despite cleaning and scorching still have a slight odour of mouse about them.

The new apiary at the watermill has this winter seen the attention of woodpeckers and members will now have to take precautions in future if they want to avoid the sort of damage seen this year being repeated.

The South Hampshire Spring Convention

Professional Centre
Sundridge Close
Cosham
Portsmouth
PO6 3JL

Saturday 13th March 2010 9.45 to 16.00

Tickets are available from our Chairman, Dave Norris in advance at £10 or on the door at £12.50

Support your local associations and come along

HBA and BBKA

At our last AGM we were able to vote in three HBA delegates to represent Southampton at the County Level. In December we went to the first meeting of the new year. It was fortunate that we were all able to attend as one of the items on the agenda related to the endorsement of pesticides by BBKA which we had discussed at length at our AGM and at previous committee meetings..

Following is an extract from the report submitted to the committee in January of the December HBA Delegate meeting..

Basic information

- Hygiene Course available in Basingstoke
- HBA Convention was widely supported and made a minimal surplus of £93.
- HBA have instructed our delegate to BBKA to have a free vote on all propositions apart from 03/2010 and 05/2010. Due to a technical error the S&DBKA delegates did not get the papers before the meeting and therefore asked that each motion was talked through individually rather than on block.
 - 03/2010 – BBKA to cease Pesticide endorsement
 - A long discussion took place resulting in the vote from Hampshire to support the motion, it was felt that the impression by the public of endorsing pesticides outweighed the financial benefit. As per BBKA rules, the required number of endorsements were received and this item will be on the agenda at the BBKA Delegates Meeting in January 2010.
 - 05/2010 – BBKA to rejoin FERA Healthy Bee Project Board.
 - A slightly heated discussion took place with Southampton taking the initial lead in supporting this motion from Dorset County BKA. Feelings were very mixed with strong views from a delegate who believed that we should support the President of BBKA unreservedly as he has the political knowledge and clout required to fight our cause with the Government. Southampton proposed that the motion be supported and was agreed by a narrow margin.
- HBA Bank balance currently stands at £10,749
- Hampshire Membership currently stands at:
 - Regular 738, Partner 44, County 44
- Hampshire Bee Talk and Handbook
 - The issue of cost was raised if Hampshire devolved the printing of the Handbook items to the Associations, It was agreed that there would be a slight decrease in costs that were unquantifiable at the moment as the Editor had been undertaking a lot of the work himself keeping the costs artificially low.
 - It was agreed that instead of a handbook in a ring binder, a 20 page booklet be printed each year with the association's officer details in. It was not decided if this would be for association officers only or for all members.
 - No more handbooks will be printed, it is requested that the ring binder handbooks are collected from members who have lapsed/left beekeeping and that they are then recycled to new members. No advice was given on how this would work in practice.
- ❖ Items associations are asked to do.
 - A request for Photographs has been made for the new HBA website that is currently being developed Woodlands Design. Photographs can be emailed to HBA Honorary Secretary (Pippabarker@aol.com)
 - Volunteers are required for the following posts within HBA, any regular member of an association can stand for these positions.
 - Chair and Bee talk Editor

Apiguard

A tale of two applications

By Tony Mabey

Apiguard is widely used within the association and when used according to the manufactures instructions can offer an effective varroa control as part of an Integrated Pest Management regime. I have used Apiguard on all of my colonies and, during routine monitoring of the varroa levels in December, noticed a marked difference in the mite drop between two pairs of hives.

The first pair was treated with Apiguard starting in August after the main honey flow had ended. The first tray was placed directly on the top of the brood frames using an eke to provide sufficient room for the bees to access the gel. All supers had been previously removed from the hive. The second tray was then added two weeks later and the full treatment finished within the suggested four week / two tray process.

The second pair of hives went to the Heather and Apiguard was then used in September / October. This was later than recommended but

allowed for the heather honey supers to be removed.

After monitoring the mite drop in December there was a noticeable difference between the two pairs of hives. The first pair treated in August had less than one mite per day over a seven day period – within the limits suggested by The Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), formally CSL. However, the hives treated in September / October had a mite drop of over 20 mites each during the seven day period – exceeding the suggested limits. These will require further treatment and I plan to use an oxalic acid/sugar syrup treatment when the weather permits. The mite counts have been reported to the Apiary Manager as per the out-apiary rules.

Some tips when using Apiguard;

- Look to attend an apiary meeting and take note of the guidance offered.
- Start to treat in August where possible.

- Aim to remove supers before treatment rather than just only removing a few middle frames.
- Peel the Apiguard tray lid back but don't remove it completely.
- Place the tray directly on the brood frame top bars and use an eke.
- Cover crown board holes.
- Read and, perhaps more importantly, follow the instructions!
- Be prepared to continue monitoring after using Apiguard as part of IPM.

To confirm that the bees never follow the text books, this year I found a queen and attending cluster on the outside of a hive during treatment. I also had one colony abscond during treatment. August and September were particularly hot months and one possible cause could have been the above average hive temperature combined with the affects of the treatment. Here's looking forward to the 2010 season.

2010 BBKA SPRING CONVENTION

Friday 16th, Saturday 17th, Sunday 18th April

The full programme can be found on the BBKA website at,
http://www.britishbee.org.uk/spring_convention.php

To purchase advance tickets have your BBKA membership number handy as you will need it to apply either on-line via the [BBKA website](#) or by post to Christine Haywood, 19 Kings Road, Leiston, IP16 4DA Tel: 01728 832 487 email violinchristine@suffolkonline.net

Advance price: On-line £14.50 (Incl Postage), by post £13.00. Full price is £15.00 on the day - members only.

The closing date for advance tickets is

Monday, April 5th 2010.