



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Stanley Gibbons

### Chairman

No Heather for the second successive year but some Ivy nectar topped up stores after the sugar syrup feed. Bees prepared for the winter, hives weather and woodpecker proofed, so what should you ponder?

**- Varroa treatment.** If no Apiguard treatment in August/September then you may consider OXALIC ACID treatment during the broodless period mid-December to early January. Prepared solution obtainable from suppliers: measured doses may be applied by syringe on a mild day.

**- Time to Study.** If you have passed the BASIC exam why not study for a BBKA module - details from Nick Bentley-Buckle: study packs, correspondence courses are available. GO ON - HAVE A GO! Basic exam will be held during summer 2010: those of you who started beekeeping in 2007 and 2008 should be prepared to enter: we will provide a preparatory session beforehand.

**- Your Apiary in 2010.** Consider an outline plan for your beekeeping and list your requirements.

### COLONIES IN THE NEW YEAR.

1. Watch the entrances on mild days: cleansing flights should be the norm: dead bees will be thrown out!

2. Food stores should be monitored (mild weather leads to greater food consumption). If stores are short in January "sugar fondant" may be placed on top of the brood frames as a supplement.

3. Brood Stimulus is sometimes practised in February and March to increase brood rearing for early crops and to build up overwintering nuclei/small colonies. Sugar syrup - 11/2lb: 1 pint in a contact feeder and a pollen substitute, eg. "Feedbee" from suppliers may be used.

4. Queen marking during an early, quick inspection on a mild day in March when colony numbers are low, makes her easier to find during April/May.

I wish you all a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and ENJOYABLE BEEKEEPING in 2010!

STANLEY

### DIARY DATES

**Book 17 April 2010 in your diaries: the BBKA Convention at Stoneleigh, Warwicks is a very good education day and a chance to buy beekeeping supplies at sale prices.**

**AGM & Honey Show**  
**Due to building work the date of our AGM & Honey has changed to the 6th February.**



Julia Powell with the Observation Hive - Alderbury School - Salisbury Journal

### Well Done & Thanks..

SEVENTY five members attended the Christmas dinner in the Lyndhurst Community Centre on Friday 4th December. All enjoyed a welcome drink followed by a fabulouse meal and jovial chat. Thanks to Sylvia and Cliff for organising the Raffle which raised a record £175. Sylvia thanks all who bought tickets. For those of you who missed out make a note to attend next year.

### New Varroa Trap

WE all know about varroa mites and their effects on our colonies and we all know that the research into fighting this beast has been intense and fast moving for many years. Much good advice and help has come from good scientific research and now a new varroa trap has been developed in the USA using the varroa mites' major weakness - their reliance on semiochemicals to locate the hemolymph of adult bees and

brood. At the ARS Chemistry Research Unit in Gainesville, the researchers are testing a bait-and-kill approach using sticky boards and natural chemical attractants called semiochemicals. In nature, Varroa mites rely on these semiochemicals to locate - and then feed on - the bloodlike hemolymph of both adult honey bees and their brood. But in this case, the mites encounter a more heady bouquet of honey bee odours that lure the parasites away from their intended hosts and onto the sticky boards, where they starve. In preliminary tests, 35 to 50 percent of mites dropped off the bees when exposed to the attractants. Free-roving mites found the semiochemicals even more attractive. Moreover, the extra dose of semiochemicals wafting through hives didn't appear to significantly interfere with the honey bees' normal behaviour or activity. The team hopes ARS' patenting of the Varroa mite attractants will encourage an industrial partner to develop the technology further. (Adapted from materials provided by USDA/Agricultural Research)



Sylvia Polton receiving the "Robinia Bowl" confectionary prize from Chris Huhne MP

## HBA CONVENTION & HONEY SHOW

BARTON PEVERIL COLLEGE was the venue for this year's gathering of the county's beekeepers. Some 200 beekeepers listened to presentations from Dr Dave Chandler of Warwick University and Clive de Bruyn internationally renowned beekeeper. Dr Chandler presented an appraisal of his team's work on using biological controls to combat the varroa mite. It was clear that his work has benefitted from the increased funding that has resulted from the successful lobbying of Parliament by beekeepers last year. Clive de Bruyn gave the audience the benefit of his forty years in beekeeping. HBA were pleased to welcome local MP, Chris Huhne, to the event to award the Honey Show trophies. Chris supported the beekeepers' cause this year in getting the Government to increase funding for bee disease research. The Honey Show gives beekeepers the opportunity to have their honey and wax products assessed by National judges and this year saw the highest number of entries for many years with some 280 entries. Hampshire Beekeepers' Association is a charity founded in 1882 with the objective of improving the craft of beekeeping throughout Hampshire and educating the general public about beekeeping through its own events and by supporting the work of the local beekeeping associations. - (HBA Press Release)

## Rethinking the Waggle Dance

(New Scientist - By Caroline Williams.)

WHEN Karl von Frisch decoded the secret language of bees in 1946, even he couldn't quite believe what he had found. Was it really possible for a creature with a brain smaller than a pinhead to do something so clever.

Countless experiments later, the bee's waggle dance has become an established scientific fact.

Or that's how the story goes. In recent years, some researchers have begun to suggest that the waggle dance is too good to be true. While they accept that the dance contains information about the location of food, they argue that its importance has been massively overstated.

In one study, Grüter and his colleague Walter Farina of the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina found that among bees that attend to a dance, 93 per cent ignore the instructions and head to a food source they already know about. Similarly, bees often seem unable to follow the instructions. Some watch more than 50 runs and make several sorties out of the hive but never find the food. The waggle dance also turns out to be much less important to foraging success than has been suggested.

So why hasn't this been noticed before? Grüter points out that most waggle dance experiments are carried out in highly unnatural conditions, using artificial feeders filled with sucrose solution in areas where there are few natural food sources. While this eliminates the confusion of having lots of bees dancing about lots of different food sources, it gives an overly simplistic picture.

Instead, Grüter and colleagues believe the waggle dance is just one component of a more complex system for directing foraging. The dance doesn't just convey spatial information, they say, it also passes on odour clues and generally motivates other bees to go foraging. Bees also glean information by observing their colleagues flying off to gather food. Some may smell or taste the nectar, some may be able to see the exact angle of the dance, others may be close enough to translate the length of the waggle. Abandoning the neat story of the waggle dance will be

difficult. Even so, it is still amazing to think that an insect can compute direction and distance accurately and communicate it to other bees. If they choose to ignore that information - well, so be it.

## Love Of Honey Drives Tool Use In Chimps

(New Scientist - By Bob Holmes.)

IF YOU'RE impressed that chimps can use tools to hunt or crack nuts, wait till you hear what they do when foraging for honey. Not only do they construct several different tools for the purposes but they use them sequentially - an achievement approaching the abilities of early Stone Age humans.

A team led by Christoph Boesch of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, studied Chimps living in Loango National Park, Gabon. They found that the chimps built and used five different tools to help them find beehives and extract honey: thin straight sticks to probe the ground for buried nests; thick, blunt-ended pounders to break open beehive entrances; thinner

lever-like enlargers to break down walls within the hive; collectors with frayed ends to dip honey from the opened hive and bark spoons to scoop out the honey.

Various tools were often found near the same hive, suggesting that the chimps employ them in sequence. A few tools even appeared to have to uses with enlargers at one end and collectors at the other. This is the first example of a non-human species constructing multi purpose tools, Some of the tools would require several steps to make, so making and using the entire toolkit implies an impressive ability to plan ahead, compared with, say, cracking a nut with a stone.

Probing for underground hives also requires the chimps conceive of the existence of unseen objects. The mental skills needed for this and the tasks that follow rival those displayed by humans in the early stone Age. says Boesch. Indeed, he believes the desire to successfully obtain honey could have been one the pressures that favoured increased intelligence as humans evolved.

## Tip for 2010

Join Bookers. If you present your BBKA membership card you can shop at Bookers. Bookers sell one or two-kilo bags of sugar for about 60p/kilo in bulk, or 25 kilo bags for the equivalent of 56p per kilo. My bees of course also like beer!!!! - Ed

**BBKA BASIC EXAM**  
**Kept bees for more than two years? Try the BBKA Basic Exam. Very Easy - your syllabus is your exam paper - i.e. you know the questions before the exam!!**