

Leiston Beekeepers' Newsletter

January to April 2011

Laurie Wiseman.....Editor - laurie.wiseman@tesco.net

**Leiston and District Beekeepers' Association
AGM
Saturday 12th February 2010
2.30pm
United Reformed Church
Chapel Road, Saxmundham, IP17 1BJ**
(Bring your subscription along if you have not paid)

The Omlet Company will be the guest speaker and will make a presentation of their Beehaus Hive. This hive is specially designed for keeping bees in your garden or rooftop. Developed to provide your bees with a safe, modern home in which to live and makes beekeeping straightforward and fun.

**A pre - season talk by Laurie Wiseman
'A Year in the Life of a Hive'
United Reform Church
Chapel Road Saxmundham
7:30pm
Wednesday 16th February 2011**

This talk covers a brief history of how bees evolved, the old ways of beekeeping to the development of the modern beehive and then describes the bees' year from their point of view.

**Suffolk Beekeepers' Association
AGM
Wednesday 2nd March 2011
7.30pm**



Grange Farm, Barsham, NR34 8JN

Guest Speaker will be Ricky Kather the East Anglian Beekeepers' (EARS) research student who will tell us of her study of varroa mites and her understanding of the way they camouflage themselves so as to live happily with the bees.

**Something different - a talk by Jeremy Quinlan.
Honey bee evolution from egg to imago.
Wed. 16 March 7.30pm at St Michael's, Martlesham Heath
<http://www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk/Ipswich.pdf>**

**Cambridge beekeepers' Association
One Day Seminar - Saturday 12th March
Apply to David Abson for tickets 01223 834620
"Better Bees and Better Beekeepers."**

Norman Carreck: Honeybee tolerance to Varroa destructor - the "holy grail" of beekeeping

Roger Patterson: My Simple Approach to Bee Improvement

David Aston: Queen rearing without loss of honey production

Andy Wattam: The twenty minute beekeeper.

An excellent lunch is provided in the ticket price

Aldringham Apiary meetings for 2011
26th March at 2:30pm. This is the first meeting of the season and it will be for a get together, apiary preparation and general clean up. Depending on the weather we may be opening the hives.

The apiary meetings will be held every Saturday from 2nd April at 2pm. You will note that we are starting 30mins earlier as we are to explain the theory of what we expect to be happening in the hives and what is to be done at each apiary visit.

A Big Thank You.

Thanks to all those members who filled in the end of season new beekeepers' questionnaire. The ideas and views received will change the way we conduct our future activities. Thanks again.

What is happening in your hive now?

The bees are beginning to stir now the days are getting longer. The worker bees will be feeding the queen a little honey and she will respond by laying a few eggs at the centre of the winter cluster. The bees closest to the eggs will vibrate their wing muscles to keep the eggs at 35degC to enable them to hatch into larva. The only food available is their stores of honey and pollen in the hive. These larvae are fed with royal jelly pollen and honey. The honey has to be diluted with condensation collected from inside the hive as the larva cannot digest undiluted honey. If the weather is warm enough you may see the bees bringing in pollen from aconites, snowdrops and hazel. Fresh pollen is always better than stored pollen and seeing it being brought into the hive is a sign of a healthy colony. From now until the end of March the winter bees will gradually die and be carried out of the hive but will be replaced by new bees from this early brood rearing. The winter population of 8000 bees will gradually die out and be replaced by this early brood rearing. By the time of the first inspection in early April all the bees will be young.

Honey wanted for sale at the Glemham Show.

Do you have any honey you wish to sell? We need honey to sell at the Glemham Game and Country Fair in May. The club will take a commission of 20% from what is sold. Please contact Sandy Sutch - sandysutch@hotmail.com

Ipswich Branch is having a Nosema Check

Are your bees are free of this insidious disease? Take a sample of at least 30 older bees per colony to the Dallinghoo Jubilee Hall IP13 0JX between 12 and 4pm on Sunday 3rd April - note for your diary! The simplest way to obtain the sample is to take an outside brood frame (these will be the old bees), shake the bees into a bucket, and quickly spray them with water, fill your match box with damp bees, slide the box closed and put it in the freezer. (All members welcome to partake of this service)

Stock list - equipment available for purchase

See attachment sent with this newsletter. Contact Joyce 01728 746155 or email tayloridgecot@btinternet.com

Arthur Dobbs was the first to observe how bees pollinated flowers

Arthur Dobbs 1689-1765 - Portrait of Arthur Dobbs, 1752, by William Hoare.



Early Days in Pollination

Pollination is really what honey bees are all about, but knowledge of this important function was slow to come to bee observers. The little known Irishman Arthur Dobbs made what we believe to be the first statement about the role of bees in pollination. This rich and influential gentleman was active in politics and science and built up a large library at Castle Dobbs in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. His words on pollination, were based entirely on observing bees in the field and he appears to have been one of those few observers like Von Frisch and others, who are able to see ‘beyond’ just the visual image and work out from that image, what is going on.

He observed and wrote:-

“.....I have frequently follow’d a bee loading farina (pollen), Bee Bread or crude Wax, upon its legs, through a part of a great field in flower; and upon whatsoever flower I saw it first alight and gather the farina, it continued gathering from that Kind of Flower; and has pass’d over many

other Species of Flowers, though very numerous in the field, without alighting upon or loading from them: tho’ the Flower it chose was much scarcer in the Field than the others. So that if it began to load from a Daisy, it continued loading from them, neglecting Clover, Honeysuckles, Violets, &c., and if it began with any of the others, it continued loading from the same kind, passing over the Daisy.....”

“Now if the Facts are so, and my observations true, I think that Providence has appointed the Bee to be very instrumental in promoting the increase of vegetables....Now if the Bee is appointed by Providence to go only, at each loading, to flowers of the same Species, as the abundant farina often covers the whole Bee, as well as what it loads upon its legs, it carries the farina from flower to flower and by its walking upon the Pistillum and agitation of its wings, it contributes greatly to the farina’s entering the Pistillum, and at the same time prevents the heterogeneous mixture of the farina of different flowers with it, which, if it stray’d from flower to flower at random, it would carry to flowers of a different species....”

“Now, if the farina of specifically different flowers should take the place of its own proper farina in the Pistillum, like an unnatural coition in the animal world, either no generation would happen, or a monstrous one, or an individual not capable of further generation.”

Why do honey bees collect pollen?

Honey bees eat nectar, honey, pollen and water. Nectar can only be stored over time by converting it into honey otherwise it will ferment with the natural yeasts in it and spoil. Nectar is converted into honey by the bees adding the enzyme sucrase and then ripening it by evaporating off the excess water content from 80% to 18%. Nectar and honey are carbohydrates, sugars, for energy and pollen is protein, full of enzymes, minerals, fats and amino acids that are needed for larval development, growth and cell repair. In June when the hive has its maximum population of developing larva the colony needs 500grams of pollen a day to feed these larvae. Young bees need to eat copious amounts of pollen to develop their glands that produce the royal jelly, wax and venom. Through the season the queen will produce 150,000 bees so the colony will need to collect about 50kg of pollen to feed all these larvae and young bees. This amount of pollen is the weight of a two bags of potatoes (wow!!) and represents millions of flowers visited. This explains why bees are important pollinators.

Tip of the Month

If your hive is light it will very likely be short of food. You can check the weight of your hive by ‘hefting’ it. This is done by gently lifting each side of the hive separately and judging its weight. I usually put, as a ‘belt and braces’ exercise, 1kg of fondant (it can be purchased from a baker’s shop) over the hole in the crown board. You must not open the hive as this will disturb the cluster and cause it to die.

Visit <http://www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk/index.html> for county information and branch newsletters.