

'A Taste of Honey' at West Lodge Park

Beales Hotels MD, Andrew Beale, is so passionate about providing locally sourced ingredients for guests that he has now arranged for bee hives to be placed in the grounds to produce the very freshest honey for the breakfast table.

Andrew has sought out the best local suppliers in Hertfordshire to ensure only the freshest ingredients are served in the hotel's Mary Beale Restaurant, whilst also helping to protect the environment with the least amount of miles travelled to the table. This latest venture will mean that honey served at the hotel has travelled only a matter of feet.

The idea evolved when local beekeepers, Ronald and Mary Hunter, were dining at the hotel. After chatting to staff, they met with Andrew, and now three hives have been set up in the 35 acre grounds of the hotel.

Members of the Enfield and District Beekeepers Association, the couple were happy to site bees at the hotel: "Beekeeping is a hobby for us and the grounds of the hotel provide a perfect setting for bees," said Ronald.

The hives have been placed in a sheltered spot and a 'Caution Flying Bees' sign put up to warn guests taking a stroll in grounds after lunch or dinner.

"We are hoping to harvest enough honey this year to have 40 jars. It will be a real taste of Hertfordshire with the pollen and nectar collected from our own grounds and surrounding fields," said Andrew.

The hives each hold approximately 50,000 bees. Only the surplus honey is removed, leaving enough for the colony to survive on through the winter. The bees harvest pollen and nectar from a 3 mile radius of the hive.



L-R Mary Hunter, MD Andrew Beale and Ronald Hunter

Honey bees are valuable pollinators and are currently under threat. By setting up hives in the grounds, it will not only benefit the hotel by producing a unique honey for the breakfast table, it will also help to protect the future of bees in the area. The arboretum contains an award winning collection of trees and shrubs that will be an important source of nectar and pollen. Recognising that bees need a constant supply of water, Andrew Beale has refurbished a pond near the hives which will also encourage and sustain other wildlife in the grounds.

It is hoped that the honey will be available for guests later in the summer.



Above, Ronald inspects the hives and left, a sign in the grounds.