



# Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association August 2014 Newsletter

## Bucks County Beekeepers AGM and Honey Show 11th October

Our Association is hosting the County Honey Show this year. It is being held on 11th October at the Church of the Good Shepherd. We have changed the format from the last couple of years; a later start to allow time for members of all Associations to be able to get to the venue, more prominence given to the AGM and a lunchtime finish. MBBKA will be running the Teas and Coffees, please contact [secretary@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mbbka.org.uk) if you can help on the day or bake a cake for the event.

It was a little embarrassing last year as there was the only one entry from our Association. As we are hosting the event it would be good if MBBKA could be well represented. The programme for the day can be found [here](#) and the Schedule of Classes along with the rules [here](#). Any questions concerning the Honey Show or about preparing entries please email [Sue Carter the County Secretary](mailto:Sue Carter the County Secretary).

During the judging there will be a debate about getting the most out of the BBKA. There are a lot of changes going on in the BBKA and with nearly 60% of our membership fees going to this organisation we, as a county, should be interested in how our money is being spent as well as ensuring that we benefit from its operation.

Our Honey Show will be on the following Wednesday 15th October, any entry submitted for the County Show can also be submitted to the MBBKA Honey Show.



### Beekeeping is a Small World

In the April issue of this Newsletter Diane Oldfield wrote an article about the Purest Honey in the World from Pitcairn Island and she mentioned a Beekeeper who had been to school in Wendover.

In July I was assessing a candidate from North Bucks (Cynthia) who said she was going to Pitcairn Island to see her husband who was working there. Cynthia believes the person Diane met was Mike Lupton-Christian, he added Christian to his name as his wife is a descendant of Fletcher Christian (of mutiny fame). An extract of the article Cynthia wrote for NBBKA is on the website [here](#).

### Bucks Show Stand Cancelled

Due to a change in management of the Home and Garden Marquee at the Bucks Show there is no longer room for our stand. We will not be represented at the Bucks Show this year.

### Bees Medicines Record Details

Thank you to everyone who came to the last summer meeting at the Association Apiary on Wednesday. Excellent turnout and so many **questions!** For those who purchased Apiguard from the tub at the meeting, below are the product details for your Veterinary Record:  
Original Supplier: [cwynnejones.com](http://cwynnejones.com)  
Original Purchase Date: 15/08/2014  
Batch Number: 01K0073  
Quantity: 3Kg  
Product Name: Apiguard  
Expiry: 01/2016

### Up and Coming Events

**30th/31st August**

**General Husbandry Training**

**7th September**

**Apiary End of Season BBQ**

From 11:00am Association Apiary

**17th September**

**Apitherapy**

**Speaker Barbara Dalby**

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

**11th October**

**Bucks County AGM and Honey Show**

Doors Open 9:00am

Church of the Good Shepherd

**15th October**

**MBBKA AGM and Honey Show**

Doors Open 7:00pm

Church of the Good Shepherd



Borage officinalis  
or Starflower

## Honeybee Colonies and the Winter

At the Apiary meeting on 20th August we discussed preparing honeybee colonies for winter and I expect that you will be reading several articles on the topic in the bee journals. Like everything in bee-keeping each Beekeeper will develop their own method and strategy for managing a colony through the winter, so rather than being prescriptive, below are considerations that one should take into account and by way of example I have described what I do in each case.

**Strong Colony:** A colony with less than 5 frames of brood at the end of August may not be strong enough to survive the winter. I unite colonies and unite again to ensure the colony is large and strong enough to survive. A couple of winters ago some of my colonies were marginal going into the winter, although they survived through to March they did not survive the long cold and damp spring that followed.

**Disease:** If a colony is not fit it will not survive a severe winter. Varroa is the most significant vector for disease. Ensuring a negligible mite drop count has to be a priority. All my colonies are treated with Apiguard except for those I hope will produce ivy honey. The treatment usually starts about the beginning of September after the last harvest. Historically the ivy and other colonies that were not Apiguarded in the Autumn are treated with oxalic acid after a two week cold snap at the height of winter, this year I am applying MAQS to the ivy foraging colonies.

**Stores:** Before the end of October ensure that all colonies have at least 40lb of stores, that is at least 4 brood frames and one super full of honey. If required I start feeding in September even if the Apiguard treatment is still ongoing. My theory being that if thymol gets into the stores it may help in the suppression of Nosema. I put my super of stores below the brood box, the bees take the stores up and in the Spring leave a clean super. It allows direct access to the brood for oxalic acid application and feeding fondant in the new year. The main risk is returning the super to above the brood box and queen excluder before the queen starts to lay in the super in the Spring.

**Protection from pests:** Put out wasp traps whilst feeding colonies, fit mouseguards and woodpecker protection before the overnight frosts arrive. Wasps (touch wood) do not seem to have been too much of an issue this year. In my home apiary, rather than fit mouseguards I have recently relied upon reducing the hive entrances and instead of fitting wire mesh for woodpecker protection to over 10 hives ensuring any bird feeders are always topped up seems to do the job.

**Monitor the colony throughout the winter:** Heft the hive regularly to check state of stores, watch on sunny days for a few bees that may be taking cleansing flights. In the Spring look for pollen going into the hive and that all the colonies are flying at the same time. Close up any colonies that die as soon as possible to prevent robbing and the spreading of disease. On a frosty day a melted patch on the roof indicates a colony that is alive, also debris under the hive indicates a happy colony as well as the size of the cluster. Damp is the biggest killer of bees during the winter. A good flow of air is essential, this can be achieved by leaving the open mesh floor exposed .

## End of Season BBQ

The last official event at the Association Apiary for this year will be the End of Season BBQ on 7th September. It starts at 11:00am helping Andrew with any tidying up jobs that need to be completed. The BBQ will be lit at Midday. Please bring along a food contribution, Andrew will be coordinating the day, he can be contacted at [apiary@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:apiary@mbbka.org.uk). If the weather is poor on the day please check the [blog](#) to see if the event is still on before setting out.

## Winter Meeting 17th September

It seems strange writing about our 1st Winter Meeting with 20°C and sunshine outside. The talk on the 17th September will be on **Apitherapy** by Barbara Dalby. She will cover the use of hive products for health and healing. Her talk goes into the benefits experienced of the using some of the bee products for health or food supplements.

open space as the tree split. It was 10 days before the bees were reported as a swarm. The colony was starving, had sealed queen cells and no brood, it looked like the colony had previously swarmed itself out. The cells on the comb are much smaller than on standard worker foundation and the bees in turn are small. The colony is now housed in a nucleus box and the queen cells pinned to a frame. The plan is to unite the colony with bees from various mini-nucs. Further updates next month.

## Swarm Call to a Wild Colony

Over the years we have had a few calls to swarms in the Bedgrove area and maybe we have found one of the sources. On 10th September the strong winds split a tree in Bedgrove Spinney with the top half of the tree falling vertically exposing a hollow trunk within which a wild colony of honeybees resided.

The colony was thrown to an

