



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association February 2015 Newsletter

Welcome to our New Members



We have over 30 new Associate Members starting the New Beekeepers Course on 23rd February at The Church of the Good Shepherd. The course is being run by Caroline Windley and there are still places available if anyone knows someone who might be interested in attending. Caroline is always happy for help from our existing membership at each training session. If you would like to support the course please email Caroline at beginnerscourse@mbbka.org.uk. It is always

beneficial for the course attendees to meet a variety of experienced beekeepers at the sessions. We all know that if you ask 5 beekeepers the same question you are likely to receive 5 different answers! Each year we try and develop the course a bit more and this year for the first time we will be holding practical training sessions on a Saturday. Thank you to Caroline for all the effort in organising the course and we hope those who attend the course find it fruitful and enjoyable.

Beekeeping Supplies

We will be placing bulk orders with Wynne Jones and Caddon Hives again this year. If you would like to order anything and benefit from no postage costs please drop me a mail chairman@mbbka.org.uk. The respective websites being beesupplies.co.uk and caddon-hives.co.uk.

Additionally we have stocks of 2nd quality frames for 14 x 12 brood, DN4 and SN1; the pricing is as per the Wynne Jones website.

Discounted Premier foundation will be available from March at these prices:

14 x 12 Brood wired	£12.50 per 10 sheets
National Brood wired	£8.75 per 10 sheets
National Super wired	£5.50 per 10 sheets
National Super unwired	£3.40 per 10 sheets

Apiary Sites

We have been offered a couple of possible Apiary sites. If you are looking for an apiary site please let me know and will pass on details. chairman@mbbka.org.uk

Quiz Night Thank You

Our thanks go to Liz Tice, Clare Hayward-Smith and all who helped organise and run the Quiz night in January. With over 50 attendees the hall was full, with a thrilling contest which was won by one question in the last round. Well done to all those who came along on the night!

19th Annual Seminar Bucks County Beekeepers

As well as speakers at the seminar, the National Bee Unit, National Trust, BBOWT and the National Honey Show will have stands. We will also be running a second hand equipment stall; if you have any clean and hopefully useable beekeeping equipment that you no longer need please bring it along and we will see if it can find a new home. All this and lunch for only £12 if you book in advance. For further information and to reserve a ticket go [here](#).

Programme of Events

18th February 2015

**Biodiversity in a bottle:
The story of the traditional English
orchard by David Curry**

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

23rd February 2015

**New Beekeepers Course Starts
every Monday for 6 weeks**

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

28th February 2015

Bucks County Seminar

10am Memorial Hall, Wendover

18th March 2015

**Biology and the management of
swarms by Andrew Gibbs**

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

28th March 2015

**Practical Beekeeping Course
Classroom Session**

9:30am Butlers Cross Village Hall



Bees eating fondant through hole in the crownboard

Membership Renewal

Those members who have not yet renewed their membership could they please do so as soon as possible. The renewal form can be found [here](#). If you have any questions about membership please contact John Dadswell at membership@mbbka.org.uk.

Practical Beekeeping Course

Due to the popularity of this course we have added more dates. The first session will be held on 28th March at Butlers Cross Village Hall, although hands on, this day will be classroom based. The two practical sessions will be on 27th/28th June and 1st/2nd July. Further information can be found [here](#).

Winter Bees Interim Report

Ken Gorman has written a report of the management of winter colonies 2014/15, it can be found [here](#).

Winter Meeting 18th February

David Curry, Chairman of the [Hertfordshire Orchard Initiative](#) will be the speaker at our next meeting on 18th February at The Church of the Good Shepherd. He will be talking about the story of the traditional English orchard. New Members are welcome to attend.

Biology and Management of Swarms

Last year colonies started swarming early, in some cases at the beginning of April. With the recent cold patch it may not be as early this year. In timely fashion our Speaker on 18th March will be Andrew Gibb, Master Beekeeper, and his talk will review "why do bees swarm?", discuss taking and hiving a swarm as well as covering topics such as; colony cohesion and impact of queen substance, impact on colony honey production from swarming and various methods of swarm control. This is all beekeeping bread and butter stuff and worth going over and over again. Hope to see you at the meeting.

Swarm Collection and Housing—Brian Bush, Swarm Officer

Last week I attended a talk at Chalfont Beekeepers by Ian Holmer. As part of his interesting talk he reminded us of our responsibilities as beekeepers. It is his contention that feral bees do not survive many winters due to Varroa infestation. When people tell us that there has been a feral bees' nest in a certain place for a number of years, Ian believes that in all possibility they have died out and a swarm has re-colonised the nest without people noticing a break in occupation.

He said that it is the responsibility of beekeepers to manage our bees to prevent swarming, and whenever possible to collect and house swarms to provide them with the help to minimise the effects of pest and diseases beekeepers have inadvertently introduced.

As I sit here today, having swept the snow from the paths, Ian's words have stirred me into action to prepare for this year's beekeeping, and in my case, swarming season. As usual the bees, and I, will need your help. 2014 was a true 'baptism of fire' for my wife Nadia and I. It was my first year as swarm officer for MMBKA. Sean Kirwan, my predecessor always made it seem so easy and I had few fears taking over from him.

They say 'Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread' and with the number of calls last year exceeding 265, we became lax at logging them after 250, we were both very busy indeed. There were times when we were on 4 phones, (the Swarm Hotline, home phone, office phone and my mobile), simultaneously. Each call to the swarm line requires at least 2, sometimes up to 6 calls to arrange a collector.

The first hotline reported swarm was Sunday 13th April. And the last call was Friday 1st October regarding a bees nest in a house in Chesham. I have since had 2 or 3 calls where bees have been discovered in compost bins and roofs.

The MBBKA area is very large and last year our neighbouring associations experienced similar problems and were at times overwhelmed so the calls were coming through to us. This also introduced us to beekeepers on the edge of our area who were able to collect swarms in the North and East of the county.

This year I would like from the outset to have as much relevant information as possible so I will be sending out an email in the coming days requesting further information from members wishing to help collect or house swarms.

If you are a beekeeper with limited space and need to split or artificially swarm a hive, if you contact me, I can loan equipment and re-home spare colonies with other association members.

This year we will once again be operating a swarm hotline system. I will be contacting as many local councils as possible and other organisations such as Thames Valley Police and Environmental Health Officers. I have some pamphlets and mini posters available if anyone wishes to put them in Local libraries, doctors surgeries etc. Please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that we have a successful year.

brian.bush@btinternet.com Mobile: 07767304067