



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association January 2014 Newsletter



Apis mellifera carnica
or Carniolan Honeybee

Activities for 2014

The 2014 Beecraft Calendar includes a "Jobs for the Month" information box detailed by each month. This month it reminds us to check hives for damage, entrances are clear of snow, heft the hive and take the opportunity to attend a course about bees and beekeeping. I think there should be an additional item; Plan and Prepare for the new season. Some of our Association's planned activities for the coming year include:

Monthly Meetings: We will continue with our Winter programme through to April and then move to the Association Apiary for our monthly summer meetings. These meetings were very popular last year and we will again be following a theme for each meeting.

Study Groups: Starting next week we will be starting our Study Group meetings on Honeybee Management and Biology. These groups follow the BBKA Module Syllabi but there is no obligation to take a Module exam.

New Beekeepers Course: We will be running a New Beekeepers Course starting on 10th March (note change of start date) with 6 classroom sessions followed by practical sessions at the Association Apiary from May.

General Husbandry: The county Association will be running two weekend courses following the BBKA General Husbandry Syllabus. In February there will be a theory session and in August a practical session.

Basic Assessment: This 5 week programme starting in May is aimed at beekeepers who have kept bees for one or two years or are returning to beekeeping after a break. Although run for members wishing to take the BBKA Basic Assessment, it is an excellent way to consolidate ones knowledge and experience and the assessment is not mandatory.

Schools Visits: This is a very popular programme run during the school summer term where as an Association we visit local schools and introduce the students to honeybees and their products.

Beekeeping Workshops: In the Autumn we will be running a series of workshops covering Honeybee Management, Products, Disease and Behaviour.

All the programmes run by our Association are free to its members, if you would like to be involved or require further information, please email chairman@mbbka.org.uk.

Change of Date and Venue

The Church of the Good Shepherd is having their heating system replaced. Originally it was thought that this would not affect our meetings, however the works seem to be more extensive than originally planned. The church and hall will be closing for a 4 week period. This means that our February meeting has moved to **Butlers Cross Village Hall** and the **New Beekeepers Course** will now start on **10th March**. Directions to the village hall can be found [here](#).

Winter Programme of Events

Wednesday 15th January Annual MBBKA Quiz Night

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

Wednesday 19th February Owls

Dave Short

7:30pm Butlers Cross Village Hall

Saturday 8th March Bucks County BKA Spring Seminar

10:00am Wendover Memorial Hall

Monday 10th March 2014 New Beekeepers Course Coordinator Caroline Windley

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

Wednesday 19th March Toxic Honey Pam Hunter

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

Wednesday 16th April Honeybee Communication John Hendrie

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd

Varroa Treatment

Many of our members reported low varroa drop counts in the Autumn as part of their winter preparations. To happen across so many different colonies must mean something. My personal view is that it was the result of the unusual season. I noted in my colonies that due to the late Spring and several periods where there was no flow my queens went off lay for periods in July, August and September. So my theory is that as the varroa rely upon a good supply of young larvae for hosts upon which they breed, their infestation was interrupted by the periods when the queen was not laying as prolifically as one would expect, thus resulting in a reduced varroa drop count.

This does not mean that varroa has gone away, in fact with the relatively mild winter we are experiencing it might mean they come into Spring all the more stronger.

The standard treatment for varroa now seems to be Thymol based products such as Apiguard in the Autumn, however with an Indian Summer there is the possibility that the varroa will re-establish themselves after treatment and before the cold sets in.

A key winter treatment for varroa is Oxalic Acid, but there needs to be no brood within the colony as it is only effective against the varroa on the bees. For there to be no brood we need a cold spell of at least two weeks and as yet this has not happened this winter.

Historically the treatment for varroa was in form of Apistan or Bayvarol strips, however misuse resulted in the varroa developing a resistance to the Pyrethroid within the treatments. There is evidence that this resistance diminishes over a period of years. So including such treatments in the Spring as part of your Integrated Pest Management (IPM) may have a beneficial affect in reducing varroa levels prior to the colony growth surge.

During the season there is a treatment that seems to be very effective. Formic acid treatment marketed as MAQS is effective on bees within the brood and on the bees. It is a newly approved product and I have to admit to being initially sceptical about it, but will try it out this year so that I can be better informed.

All of the above are chemical treatments applied to bee colony and MUST be recorded on the Bee Medicines Record Card.

One must bear in mind that chemical treatments are not the only way of managing varroa and should form part of an IPM scheme which includes some or all of; use of open mesh floor, icing sugar, artificial swarm and drone brood culling.

MBBKA Quiz

The Annual MBBKA Quiz Night is being held on 15th January, I hope you can attend and help make this a successful and fun evening.

The Quiz will not only be about beekeeping, it will be topical and hopefully enjoyable. There will be teams of 4 on each table, you can come as a team or join a table on the night.

The entry is the same price as last year £6.00 and includes either fish or chicken with chips, supplied by a local chip shop, as well as a raffle ticket for the draw. So that we can order the appropriate food please contact Liz Tice via email at: secretary@mbbka.org.uk

Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be provided, feel free to bring along other beverages and suitable prizes for the raffle.

Any proceeds from the evening will be donated to Bees for Development.

Bucks County Beekeepers Association Spring Seminar

The Spring Seminar will be held on 8th March 2014 at Wendover Memorial Hall. Doors open at 10:00am for tea and coffee prior to the 1st talk at 10:30am. Please register with fiona.matheson.fm@gomail.com tickets are £15 each which includes lunch.

Second hand Equipment Stall

If you are downsizing or replacing beekeeping equipment and are happy to sell your old stuff to other members please contact me.

There will be a Second hand Equipment Stall at the Spring Seminar and I am looking for stock to sell.

Bulk Equipment Order

Each year in late February/early March I place orders with Caddon Hives (www.caddon-hives.co.uk) and C. Wynne Jones (www.cwynnejones.com) for beekeeping equipment. Large orders avoid delivery charges. If you would like to acquire equipment from either of these suppliers as part of these orders please contact me.

We will also be offering discounted foundation for sale again this year.

Membership Renewal

If you have yet to re-new your membership for 2014 please contact John at membership@mbbka.org.uk

Finally a christmas cracker bee joke....

What did the Bee say when he returned to the hive?
"Honey, I'm Home!"