



Bishop of Buckingham Visits our Training Apiary



Senior staff from the Diocese of Oxford recently enjoyed an Introduction to Beekeeping away day, culminating in a visit to the teaching apiary at Stoke Mandeville.

The Bishop of Buckingham, the Archdeacon and a number of Area Deans and Lay Chairs were able to taste a selection of honeys, watch the DVD Dancing with Bees hear what 5 things a beekeeper is looking for in a routine inspection, and roll a candle.

After lunch they were made very welcome at the apiary where Sean, Andrew, Karen and Gill took them in smaller groups to see inside the hives. The group were fascinated by the experience and asked numerous questions. They weren't in a hurry to leave and so were able to see a queen being marked and clipped, a colony united and the difference between a queen right colony and a drone laying colony. A really engaging day with a number of possible converts!

Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association July 2014 Newsletter

Preparing for Winter

Our last summer meeting at the Association Apiary will be on Wednesday 20th August. The theme for the evening will be preparing for winter. With the honey harvest over by the middle of August we all should be starting to make preparations for the cold months ahead. Such considerations as uniting colonies, varroa treatment and building up stores all need time. It would be good to see both new and experienced beekeepers at the meeting.

Stand at Bucks Show

We will be running a stand in the Home and Garden Marquee again this year; it is usually our busiest event of the year. If you would like to help man the stand on 28th August please email me at chairman@mbbka.org.uk

Record Swarm Year

We have experienced what may have been our busiest swarming season for some time. If you have collected one or more swarms this season, not from your home apiary, could you please email details to swarm@mbbka.org.uk so we can produce a report for the AGM in October.

Honey Extraction Day

We will be running a honey extraction day on Sunday 3rd August, starting at 10:00am.

We plan to go through the whole process from removing the supers from the hives at the Association apiary, through to jarring some honey. It is a hands-on event with everyone getting a chance to uncap and spin the frames, filtering and weighing out a jar of honey.

The day is focussed upon helping new beekeepers, however all members are welcome. To register for the day please email education@mbbka.org.uk.

Up and Coming Events

3rd August

Extraction Day

Contact: education@mbbka.org.uk

20th August

Summer Apiary Meeting

6:30pm Association Apiary

28th August

Bucks County Show

10:00am—5:00pm

Bucks County Showground

7th September

Apiary End of Season BBQ

From 11:00am Association Apiary

17th September

Apitherapy

7:30pm Church of the Good Shepherd



Manuka bush in Tresco Abbey Gardens

Queen Rearing using the Miller Method

We have now completed the programme of queen rearing for this season. Moderate success has been attained in our grafting of larvae, with members doing it for the first time achieving 50% acceptance rates. Overall it has been a good learning experience and we will try and start the same programme earlier next year. Apart from the fixed time scheduled the hardest part seems to have been with the mini-nucs, the bees seem to take to the Apideas more easily than the cheaper white mini-nucs.

The rearer colony has now been returned to being a honey producing colony, during the rearing programme it still filled two supers as well as occupying 2 brood boxes to the hilt.

As a final queen raising exercise we cut a Miller frame from a breeder colony and placed it in a queenless nucleus in order for the bees to build queen cells. This method is extremely easy to do:

- Find a frame comprising mainly eggs from the colony you wish to rear a queen from.
- Between a third and half way up the frame cut a series of V's (I use an old serrated kitchen knife and strong scissors to cut through the wires)
- Place the frame in a Nucleus box with plenty of bees, stores and emerging brood but no eggs
- After 4 days pinch out capped and poorly formed queen cells, leaving uncapped cells.
- Leave for a further 6 days before cutting out the cells and placing them in the desired mating colonies using queen cell protectors.



Queen cells from our final grafting



Miller frame



Queen cells after 4 days

Last New Beekeepers Training Session 24th July

This year's new beekeepers training finishes this week with the last apiary session. Throughout the rest of the summer we will be carrying out colony inspections on 30th July, 7th/13th/27th August. If you would like to help please come along from 18:30, all members are welcome.

Bees Do Not Read the Books

This summer I have experienced several instances where the bees have not read the bee-keeping books, here are some examples:

- Uniting 2 colonies, top queenless colony rapidly eats through newspaper and promptly kills the queen in a strong colony below then lays down 30 emergency queen cells
- When provided with good starter comb in a mini nuc and a good queen cell the bees migrate to the feeder section and draw comb where the queen cannot get to it
- Bailey comb change is to help reduce disease in the colony, not to build up in order to swarm. Every Bailey colony this year went straight into swarm preparations as soon as the procedure was complete
- When a colony casts the bees are meant to go with one queen. Several times this year on catching a swarm there have been two queens, in one case three. The first was found balled by the swarm box, the second dead at the entrance to the hive the morning after hiving the swarm and the third mated well producing a strong colony.

Neither Does the Beekeeper!

Sometimes we are so deep into a manipulation that we get it wrong:

- The queen could not be found in the brood box, neither eggs or larvae were to be seen, the colony was united with a second safe in the knowledge there was only one queen, that queen was replaced with a better queen shortly afterwards, for the new queen to be promptly killed, the original queenless colony DID have a queen in the super!!
- Uniting two strong colonies so as to take advantage of a flow results in swarming, the united colony had no space in the double brood box. Bang goes another good queen...
- Could not get a colony to lay down stores in the super in a top bee space Smith hive, the queen was laying on 10 frames because the stores on the frames were reducing her laying space. Removed the framed queen excluder to reduce the gap between brood and super as the queen will not leave the brood. Left it 2 days too long the bees moved much of the honey from the brood to the super frames meaning there was no stores barrier and queen now laying in the super!!