



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association May-July 2015 Newsletter

A lot has Happened in the last Three Months

I apologise that it has been three months since the last Newsletter. I started writing this Newsletter in May and a very busy beekeeping Spring took over! Most of the activity has been to do with other beekeepers, luckily my bees have kept themselves to themselves. Please take time to read the articles on SMARTBEES, the Practical Beekeeping Course and the Bucks Show as these are all Bucks County Beekeepers Association led projects which have helped to occupy my time.

Drone Laying Queen

The picture to the right shows the brood pattern of a Drone Laying Queen. A queen may lay only drones for various reasons; poor mating and ageing queen are two of the most common. In this example it is a poorly mated queen from early queen rearing in May. Note the normal lay pattern and the drones being laid in worker cells as apposed to laying workers who lay in a random pattern with on occasions several eggs in a single cell attached to the side. The colony with a drone laying queen can be successfully united with a colony with a functioning queen, as was this one, whereas a laying worker colony should be shaken out away from the apiary and the hardware removed from the stand. The bees tidy up the comb of a drone laying queen making it a win win situation.



MAQS Varroa Treatment

If you are considering using MAQS for mid season varroa control please take time to read the improved Field Guide and FAQs before application, it can be found [here](#). There have been negative reports as to the side affects of the use of MAQS (loss of queens, death of sealed brood and absconding bees). The key to the successful use of MAQS is ventilation and the right ambient temperature.

Products for Sale at Shows

As you can see from the adjacent programme of events for the summer we will have a stand at several shows culminating in the Bucks County Show on 27th August. If you have honey for sale at any of these events, please contact the organiser. The organisers are always looking for additional helpers on the day, if you are available please volunteer.

This year at the Bucks County Show the stand will be on one of the main avenues and we will be able to sell honey. It is being run by the county BKA as joint event across all the Beekeeper Associations in the county. It is an enjoyable and rewarding day, if you would like to be involved please contact me.



Greater Wax Moth
Galleria mellonella

Programme of Events

15th July 2015

Association Meeting

Karen Smith will demonstrate a Colony Bee Disease Inspection, followed by attendees inspecting the Association's colonies

7:00pm

Association Apiary

18th July 2015

Lee Flower Show

Sarah Turner Organising

sarahamturner@onetel.com

25th July 2015

Taste of Summer Wendover

Sean Stephenson Organising

chairman@mbbka.org.uk

1st August 2015

Monks Risborough Hort. Soc. Fair

Jonathan Matthews Organising

matthewsjp@yahoo.co.uk

19th August 2015

Association Meeting

Preparing for Winter

7:00pm

Association Apiary

27th August 2015

Bucks County Show

Sean Stephenson Organising

chairman@mbbka.org.uk

Practical Beekeeping Course

For the first time this year we ran a Practical Beekeeping Course for members with at least 3 years beekeeping experience. The Course was over 3 days, one day in the classroom in late March and 2 days in the apiary in late June. In all 18 members from across the county attended the course and based upon the feedback we will run the course again.

There were two main themes to the course; queen and disease management, with manipulations and honey production elements supporting these activities. In March we laid down the working practices for successful apiary management and in June we spent the whole two days in the apiary working with the bees and practising our skills.



Brood disease inspection training, in the English Summer!

Each attendee took away a populated Apidea with a sealed queen cell as a culmination of their work on the course. If you are interested in attending next year's course please email Karen Smith at education@mbbka.org.uk.

SMARTBEES

In May I was invited to attend a training day at the National Bee Unit in York as part of the SMARTBEES launch in the UK. SMARTBEES is a European wide project for the development of local hybridised honeybees with resistant traits to varroa and viruses. You can find out more and follow the project [here](#). The project is demanding in resources; it is looking for areas within the UK to set up a queen breeding programmes based upon 3 apiaries of 10-20 colonies within a defined locality.

It was agreed at the last Bucks County BKA meeting in June that we should pursue this project, building one apiary in the first year and two more in subsequent years. There are many challenges from finding suitable locations for queen mating through to managing the resources across the county in order ensure a successful outcome. Beekeeping in Buckinghamshire should benefit from being involved in this project from establishing a county wide breeding programme through to disseminating experience in queen rearing based upon proven techniques employed throughout Europe.

We are in a bit of a limbo state just now as we await the project contracts, if you would like to be part this activity please email chairman@mbbka.org.uk

Colony Loss Survey 2015

The response to the colony loss survey this year has been minimal, maybe I should have chased for them! This year I will not be publishing the results. Anecdotal evidence from our members and talking to beekeepers across the country, there were very few losses over the winter but a combination of ivy stores and dwindle of colony populations in the Spring (presumably suffering from Nosema) meant that losses were higher outside of the measured period.



Dysentery on the frames within the hive (as shown above) is a possible sign of Nosema.

Nosema weakens the honeybee and shortens its life. In the winter this can reduce the cluster size away from the stores causing starvation and hence an ever declining cycle of the colony.

There is no approved medication for the treatment of Nosema, however regular comb change and maintaining strong colonies are good strategies in keeping it at bay.

Items for Sale to members

In addition to the usual frames and foundation we have Apiguard and MAQS treatments as well as jars for sale to the members. The varroa treatments are available in per hive quantities and there is no minimum purchase quantity for the jars. If you require such items, please contact: chairman@mbbka.org.uk

Bee Health Advisors

The National Bee Unit is introducing a scheme whereby local Associations include the role of Bee Health Advisor within their structure. The BHA is an experienced beekeeper who would be the first contact by an Association member if they suspected disease within their colony. In cases of notifiable brood diseases the BHA would assist the Bee Inspector in locating local beekeepers not registered on BeeBase.

Frank Rickett and Brian Bush will be the MBBKA Bee Health Advisors. Training for role occurs later this month.