



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association November 2016 Newsletter

AGM and Honey Show Report

Thank you to everyone who attended the AGM on 19th October and well done to everyone who entered the Honey Show, we had 73 entries from 18 members. The AGM received reports from the Committee, elected a full committee for the coming year and awarded Vanessa Rickett the Barbara Tweedie Cup for her outstanding efforts in running the schools visits programme. The draft minutes of the meeting and final reports can be found on the website [here](#). Thanks go to Sue Lang for judging the Honey Show and to Kate Hughes for stewarding. A full list of the winners is shown below, congratulations to Helen Palmer for most points awarded and to the MBBKA Apiary for Best in Show. The MBBKA Apiary frame that won the Laurie Web Cup and the Best in Show at the County Show came third in its class at the National Honey Show, a truly well travelled frame! It would be good to have more than 18 members enter the Honey Show next year.

2 Jars of medium honey	MBBKA Apiary
2 jar for taste and aroma	Best in show - The Stuchberry Shield
1 frame of capped honey	Helen Palmer
3 jars of honey for sale	MBBKA Apiary - The Laurie Web Cup
1 bottle of sweet mead	MBBKA Apiary
Dry mead	Sean Stephenson
1 cake of beeswax	Sean Stephenson
2 matching candles	Jonathan Palmer - The Peter Smith Prize
Beginners jar of honey	Andrew Smith
Honey cake	Susanna Geoghegan - The Apiary Cup
Home produced food item	Susanna Geoghegan - W E Jones Cup
A photograph	Jonathan Palmer
A craft/woodwork item	Kate Hughes and Caroline Steven
Other Hive Product	Sean Kirwin
	Sean Stephenson - The Pink Lady Plate

The **Laurie Web Rose Bowl** for the most points in classes 1-15 was awarded to Helen Palmer.

November Meeting

At our meeting on 16th November Bill Fisher will be giving a talk on items that he has fashioned to help make his Beekeeping life easier. Bill a past Chairman of Chalfonts BKA has a wealth of practical experience in Beekeeping and this will be a great opportunity for our members to benefit from some of his knowledge. I hope to see you at the meeting, it would be great to have a good turn out for our last meeting of 2016.

National Honey Show

If you did not get a chance to go to the National Honey Show this year, have a close look at the adjacent image.

At first glance it looks like real fruit in the bowls, in fact they are wax moulds. The detail in each item is extraordinary and the colouring is fantastic.

Apparently this was put together in 4 weeks from starting with learning the skill to the finished item. AMAZING!

Programme of Events

16th November 2016

**Things That Help Make
Beekeeping Easier**

Bill Fisher

7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

18th January 2017

MBBKA Annual Quiz

7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

11th February 2017

Bucks County Spring Seminar

10:00am

Memorial Hall, Wendover

20th February 2017

New Beekeepers Course Starts

Church of the Good Shepherd

22nd February 2017

**Beekeeping DIY, Design and the
Bee Space**

Ken Gorman

7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

22nd March 2017

Tree Bumblebees

Clive Hill

7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd



Varroa Management by Sean Stephenson

This article is titled varroa management because we all have to assume that the days of a varroa free colony are over and one of our roles as a beekeeper is to manage the levels of varroa within a colony so that the stress and resultant spread of disease is kept to a minimum.

Those of our members who attended Hasan Al Toufailia's talk last year will remember how he stressed that reducing the varroa count over winter leads to stronger colonies in the Spring. If you have not already come across Randy Oliver on the Scientific Beekeeping website please go [here](#). Randy along many others, including the National Bee Unit talk about treating for varroa so that there are several brood cycles before the onset of winter. This usually means treating about the middle of August. Remember Apiguard treatment is 6 weeks and a brood cycle 21 days. Without these last few brood cycles following treatment colonies will not produce the young healthy bees that become the winter bees.



A female varroa mite - © Crown copyright 2010

The colony is at its most vulnerable over the winter and all our efforts should be to ensure we have strong healthy colonies going into the winter. Critical to this is the need for winter bees, these are healthy bees that have gorged on pollen building fat bodies to ensure longevity so that they are available to tend the young in the Spring.



Typical sign of varroasis © Gerry Collins

This year I invested in a couple of openly mated "Hygienic" queens from LASI, a programme Hasan is also involved in, and treated the colonies with Apiguard or equivalent product in early Autumn. The colonies had a measurable varroa drop. Not a surprise as hygienic bees are meant to manage varroa rather than eradicate them. What this brought home to me was that no matter what the nature of a colony they can always do with help to ensure they are healthy for the winter.

Typically, annual varroa management involves Autumn Apiguard treatment, oxalic acid after two weeks of freezing or near freezing conditions and the use of MAQs during the season if a colony suffers an infestation of varroa. The Autumn Apiguard may also be replaced by MAQs if the beekeeper wishes to take advantage of a late flow such as ivy or runs out of time. Outside temperature is

critical to the success of MAQs and this Autumn it was warm enough to apply MAQs through till late October.

At times I have treated what appear to be healthy colonies with a low varroa drop counts with MAQs and been surprised with the significant volume of varroa on the board at the end of the week's treatment. What this tells me is do not rely on varroa drop count to decide if you should treat in the Autumn, do it as a matter of course.

Relying on oxalic acid treatment for managing varroa is a bit of a game of chance, one is relying on a long cold spell over the winter and this has not been the case over the last couple of winters. As Hasan has proved, oxalic acid is a great way of reducing varroa count as long as there is no brood, because it is only effective on the varroa clinging to the emerged bees.

The key to managing varroa within a colony is to ensure that as a beekeeper you have an annual programme and employ different tactics throughout the year, particularly in the Autumn to ensure sufficient healthy winter bees to see the colony through to the Spring.



BBKA Modules Study Groups Start January

This winter we will be running Study Groups for BBKA Module 2, Honey Bee Products and Forage, and Module 6, Honey Bee Behaviour. The Module 2 Study Group starts 3rd January and will be lead by Helen Palmer, the Module 6 Study Group will be lead by myself and will start 10th January. Details will shortly be sent out to those who have signed up. There are still a couple of places available with each group, if you wish to join one or both please contact Jonathan at education@mbbka.org.uk