



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association September 2017 Newsletter



International Bee Research Association

Norman Carreck the Science Director of IBRA will be giving a talk titled "The Work of the International Bee Research Association". The International Bee Research Association was founded in 1949 and based in Buckinghamshire 1955-86 with a mission to "promote the value of bees by providing information on bee science and beekeeping worldwide". It does this through the publication of journals, including Bee World, our popular journal founded in 1919, which brings science to the beekeeper. The Journal of Apicultural Research, founded in 1962 is a revered scientific journal which publishes articles on all aspects of bees and beekeeping, including hive products. IBRA also publishes books, of which "plants for bees" is a notable bestseller. They also publish other items such as our bee disease identification cards and pollen load cards. IBRA also organises and supports meetings and conferences. IBRA is a Registered Charity and is supported by its members and through sales of publications, donations and legacies. As well as IBRA, Norman is involved in many aspects of UK Bee Research so is ideally placed to answer questions on current programmes. He will bring with him a selection of items from the IBRA Bookshop.



Study Groups over the Winter

During the winter months, the Association runs Study Groups for two BBKA Modules. This year we will be studying Honey Bee Management and Honey Bee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning. The BBKA runs a continual education programme based upon 8 modules. The two mentioned above are modules 1 and 3 respectively. Each March and November the BBKA organises module exams. Our Study Groups are open to all our members and there is no obligation to sit an exam. The objective is to develop Beekeeping skills and knowledge using the BBKA module structure as a basis. The Study Groups will commence in November with alternate weekly sessions for each module. If you would like further information on the content of the modules please go to the BBKA [website](#) and if you are interested in joining one or both groups please contact Jonathan Matthews at education@mbbka.org.uk. If there is interest from members who have participated in previous modules we can also run a Module 5 Honey bee Biology study group, again starting in November. Please contact Jonathan if you are interested.

The last big flow!

Walking around the apiary on a cool Autumnal September morning the bees are out foraging as if it were mid summer. The reason is Ivy! For Honeybees, Ivy is just about the last significant source of nectar and pollen of the year. Pass any hedgerow at this time of year you will be able to smell the Ivy from some distance and it will be covered with all sorts of insects including Bumble Bees, Wasps and of course Honeybees. The flowers are abundant and simple as can be seen in the adjacent image. Ivy honey has a high ratio of glucose compared with fructose so, like oil seed rape, will rapidly crystallise, even within sealed comb. Once extracted, if the honey is left in in a bucket for a few months and then creamed it comes out with a lovely dark brown colour and is smooth on the tongue. The crystallisation does not seem to bother the bees as supers with Ivy honey will be cleaned out by Spring. The trick is to get the bees to consume it before the Spring flow, for instance by using it as feed during a Bailey comb change.

Programme of Events

20th September 2017
Association Meeting

Norman Carreck, The work of IBRA
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

23rd September 2017
BBOWT My Wild Chilterns

10am-4.30pm
MBBKA stand at event
more details [here](#)

23rd September 2017
Bucks County Autumn Gathering and Honey Show

Doors open 9:30am
[County Honey Show Poster](#)
[County Honey Show Schedule](#)

18th October 2017
AGM and Honey Show

7:30pm
Church of the Good Shepherd

15th November 2017
Association Meeting

Chris Parkes, Skep Beekeeping Past and Present
7:30pm
Church of the Good Shepherd

Preparing for the Honey Show

It is always the same when preparing exhibits for the Association Honey Show. Things do not go right first time so best start early! Throughout the season it is a good idea to collect blocks of wax. Old comb and scrapings from the hive after processing in a wax extractor are good to be traded in for new foundation. Cappings from honey extraction once drained of honey and washed are ideal for making wax products, such as candles, wax cakes and small blocks. The really frustrating thing about wax is that it always looks perfect when molten, then when the items come out of the mould the impurities show themselves in an obvious way. As soon as the wax items are semi hard they can go into the freezer overnight and generally when immersed in a basin of cold water in the morning pop out of the mould without bother. Every Bee-keeper has their own process for preparing the perfect wax. In the September 2016 Newsletter there is a description of how to prepare wax, the main thing is make sure no one else is in the house and cover the work surfaces with newspaper as wax can be a bit messy!



After every extraction it is a good idea to put a couple of jars of honey aside, particularly if the honey has a distinct colour, flavour or taste and ideally all three. Honey when stored in sealed buckets will generally crystallise, before warming for jarring check the texture of the honey it might be worth using some for creaming or letting granulate in the jar. Warming the honey to a porridge like consistency enables the honey to be jarred without breaking down the desired crystals. Not all honeys will end up they way the judges would like them to be but unless one tries to do different things with honey we will not learn about the product.



Note the top right jars have frosting which is due to the honey granulating and coming away from the side jar this does not affect the taste however it would be difficult to sell due to the looks.

Google "mead making" and there will be a host of YouTube videos that come up showing you how to make mead. Many of the American videos seem to use bought honey.

A really simple method is, after extracting honey, to pour the honey from the uncapping tray into a demijohn, top it up with water and add wine yeast. The batch shown was started at the beginning of August and placed in a warm cupboard, it started fermenting within hours and will continue for another month or two. Hopefully it will be ready for next year's Honey Show. The rule is the more honey in the mead the longer it takes to ferment and the higher percentage of alcohol.

A good thing about the judges at a Honey Show is that they will write comments about your entries, take note because they are designed to help you produce a better product next time.

The Schedule of classes for this year's MBBKA Honey Show which is held on the same evening as our AGM on 18th October can be found [here](#). Please take a look and register your entries. Remember the [County Honey Show](#) on 23rd September and the [National](#) 26th-28th October.



The New BBKA

You may have noticed when reading recent issues of the BBKA News that there seems to be a lot going on at the BBKA. Under the Chairmanship of Margaret Murdin there seems to be more focus on running an efficient operation to the benefit of its members.

The Accounts for this year are looking positive for the second year running and a balanced budget is planned for next year without recourse to increasing the capitation fee from the member Associations.

There are new publications being launched, new Educational courses established and new Assessments trialled which will eventually fill the gaps between some of the current Modules and Assessments.

A full report by Maragret Wilson (BBKA Trustee) detailing these activities can be found [here](#).

Howard Pool (High Wycombe BKA) is the lead BBKA Trustee on the Finance Committee. Gordon Cutting (Chalfonts BKA) and Fiona Eelbeck (North Bucks BKA) sit on the BBKA Examinations Board. The BBKA needs more Trustees and Volunteers to help in overseeing the operation, if you have the time and would to help the BBKA please drop me an email at chairman@mbbka.org.uk and I can provide you with some more information on how to proceed.