



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association November 2017 Newsletter



Skep Beekeeping Past & Present

Our next winter meeting is on Wednesday 15th November at the Church of the Good Shepherd starting 7:30pm. The speaker will be Chris Park. Chris will talk through some beekeeping history and heritage, looking at bee-skeps and how they have been put to use. There will be a slide show and an exhibition of various styles of bee-baskets and artefacts. The talk will also cover some contemporary research and experimentation with skep-beekeeping. There may also be circulating a horn full of meddyglyn!

Chris Park is a skep maker and skep beekeeper. He lives on an organic farm in the Vale of the White Horse. His work is wide and varied, from arts and craft, ancient technologies, experimental archaeology and educational projects to eco-building, professional story telling and raising the awareness of heritage beekeeping. You can see some of his work at www.acorneducation.com. He is chairman of the newly formed British Beekeeping Heritage Society and is known to give entertaining lectures.



Moving Colonies over the Winter

The winter is a great time to have a good sort out from the season past and prepare for the one coming.

One task that beekeepers like to do is rearrange their apiary, be it moving colonies within the apiary or moving colonies to a different apiary. Winter is one of the few times that the rule of moving a colony 3ft or 3miles can be broken. During a cold spell (colder than the current weather) the bees cluster tightly and do not venture out. If the cold spell lasts two weeks or more a colony can be moved anywhere within the apiary ignoring the distance rule. The bees, on emerging on the first 'warm' day, will re-orientate themselves to the hive whether it has moved or not, this activity is reminiscent of a swarm emerging from the hive. If moving a hive during a cold snap, extreme care must be taken not to jolt the hive. A sudden knock can cause the cluster to fall from the comb and the colony may perish due to it not being able to reassemble on the comb. Moving a colony between apiaries is best carried out in the season but sometimes the Beekeeper has no choice. In the cold, close the hive up as usual then move it overnight to a warmer place such as a garage or utility room to allow the cluster to loosen. Make sure the transport is warm before loading the hive. At the remote location, before unloading the hive leave it for a while to settle in the warm transport.

We have no control over the weather but an ideal time to move a colony in the winter is in the middle of the day on a sunny day so that any sun will warm the hive.

Salvia microphylla 'Hot Lips'

The adjacent photo was taken on 9th November, early in the morning with an outside temperature of less than 10 degrees. Salvias are the largest group in the Lamiaceae family with over 1,000 species. Lamiaceae are very bee friendly and include Rosemary, Mint, Lavender, Thyme and Deadnettle.

This is Salvia microphylla 'Hot Lips', it gets its name from the red colouring to the ends of the flower's lower lobes. The flowers generally go on until the first frost and this autumn they have been particularly prolific with honey bees all over them the minute the sun comes out, no matter what the temperature.

Winter 2018 Programme of Events

15th November 2017
Association Meeting

Chris Park, Skep Beekeeping Past and Present
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

17th January 2018
Association Meeting

Alan Roberts, Asian Hornet
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

21st February 2018
Association Meeting

Dr. Michael Keith-Lucas, Pollination
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

21st March 2018
Association Meeting

Ian Judge, Products of the Hive
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

18th April 2018
Association Meeting

Members 15 minute talks
7:30pm

Church of the Good Shepherd

2017 Honey Show Results

Thank you to everyone who entered the honey show this year. We had 16 people entering and a total of 72 individual entries. Thanks go to our Judges Sue Carter and Bill Fisher and also to Dorrie Tutton and Jenny Morgan for Stewarding. The judges did comment on the quality of the exhibits and how this continues to improve. Many thanks to all who entered to make the show a success and a special thank you goes to those who entered the show for the first time this year. Hopefully next year a few more members will be tempted to enter.

The winners in each class in the 2017 show were:

2 jars of light honey	Jenny Morgan
2 Jars of medium honey	Jenny Morgan
2 jars of dark honey	Jenny Morgan
2 jars of crystallised honey	B Duncan-Smith & Caroline Luxford
2 jars of soft set honey	B Duncan-Smith & Caroline Luxford

Best in show - The Stuchberry Shield

1 jar for taste and aroma	Sean Stephenson
1 frame of capped honey	Caroline Luxford- The Laurie Web Cup
3 jars of honey for sale	MBBKA Apiary
Carton of comb honey	Andrew Smith
1 bottle of sweet mead	B Duncan-Smith & Caroline Luxford
Dry mead	Sean Stephenson
1 cake of beeswax	Helen Palmer - The Peter Smith Prize
2 matching candles	Sean Stephenson
Beginners jar of honey	Paul Spencer - The Apiary Cup
Honey cake	Susanna Geoghegan - W E Jones Cup

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

Classes judged in the hall by attendees:

Home produced food item	Jenny Morgan
A photograph	Jonathan Palmer
A craft/woodwork item	Anne Ashton
Other Hive Product	Andrew Smith - The Pink Lady Plate

New MBBKA Committee for 2017/18

At our AGM in October we elected the new Committee for 2017/18, one might consider it a reshuffle. Ruth has stepped down as Treasurer and Andrew is moving from Apiary Manager to be the new Treasurer. Kevin, last year's New Beekeeper representative, has agreed to become the new Apiary Manager. I remember Frank asking me to become Apiary Manager in my 3rd year of beekeeping and I have to say it was a steep learning curve but very enjoyable. Dahud has taken Kevin's place as the Novice Beekeeper on the Committee. Helen Palmer will remain Honey Show Secretary and take on the role of Vice Chairman. A full list of Committee members is shown to the right.

Position	Nomination
Chairman	Sean Stephenson
Vice-Chairman	Helen Palmer
Secretary	Liz Tice
Treasurer	Andrew Smith
Membership Secretary	Jonathan Palmer
Apiary Manager	Kevin Crangles
Programme Secretary	Sarah Turner
Librarian	Jon Theobald
Honey Show Secretary	Helen Palmer
Education Officer	Jonathan Matthews
Novice Beekeeper	Dahud Khan
Committee Member	Caroline Windley
Committee Member	Godfrey Clements
Committee Member	Dorrie Tutton

National Honey Show

Bucks had another great year at the National Honey Show winning for the fourth year in a row the Smallholders Shield which is awarded to the county with the most points at the Show. Congratulations to Helen Palmer for winning the EH Thorne Trophy for her two jars of medium honey' and Sean Stephenson for winning Jean Blaxland Memorial Prize for Mead for his melomel.

The Shield will be on display at our next meeting on 15th November.



Out Apiaries

We continue to receive offers from members of the public with potential apiary sites. The latest being in Addlington to the north of the county. We now have a total of 13 available sites across the whole area that Mid Bucks covers. John Dadswell, our President, is the custodian of the list of potential sites. John can be contacted at john.dadswell@gmx.com. It would be good if as an Association we could take advantage of these offers from the public.