



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association June 2019 Newsletter

Welcome to the June Issue of the MBBKA Newsletter.

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Editorial

At the end of this editorial you will see that I am planning to curtail my activities. I have been thinking about all the activities carried out by our committee and volunteers. Elsewhere in the newsletter Kevin has provided a short report and some photographs of volunteers erecting the new apiary shed. I confess I did not immediately recognise some of them so assume they are newer members. Well done one and all.

How much time does Kevin as Apiary Manager put in for the Association? He probably sees more of the Association hives than he does his own!

What about our other committee members and other club volunteers. We have the team that visits schools, the groups that run the stand at fetes and shows. We have members who tutor others for exams, book speakers for talks, work with the new members and the list goes on and on.

I believe one of the strengths of our Association is the number of members who actively take part. We have an Association to be proud of and many times members of other Associations have commented on how good we are. I have met former members who have said how much they miss the culture of Mid Bucks.

If you have been too shy to volunteer I urge you to come forward and offer to do something. Everyone has something to offer and we always appreciate another pair of hands.

How are your bees doing?

I briefly spoke to Sean today and he asked if the swarm-line had been busy. I have included a short report in the newsletter but 2019 has not been too hectic as yet. Sean, ever the optimist, says that the reduction in the number of swarms is down to better beekeeping by our members!!! He may be correct but I will withhold my judgement until after the first weekend in June. The forecast is for prime swarming weather, hot and humid. Please don't tell the bees!!!

BBKA and County Capitation Fees

The Mid Bucks capitation payment to the BBKA have been paid and acknowledged and all Mid Bucks full and family member's 3rd party public and product liability insurance is in place. The recent switch to the new BBKA membership database has resulted in some of our more recent full and family members not receiving their copies of BBKA news. We have been assured by BBKA that the new database is now providing the mailing list for BBKA news and all member should receive the July issue (the June mailing list was sent to print prior to this issue been resolved).

The 4 Associations that belong to the Bucks County Beekeepers Association pay an annual fee to the county to cover events like the spring seminar, county honey show and county training events. The aim of the county is not to make a profit but to maintain this fee at the level required for the activities it undertakes

Swarm Collection 2019

This Swarm Season so far

We have received 80 calls to the swarm line number between 18th April and 31st May.

Of these 30 were about swarms of bees in the Mid Bucks area and close periphery that could be collected. Several had gone by the time a collector attended and about half were small, probably cast, swarms.

We have had the usual number of calls for bumble bees and bees in the fabric and chimneys of buildings. These callers have been advised to contact one of our associated pest controllers.

We have received calls from Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire residents. People in Milton Keynes can easily find that a MBBKA member to the north of our region comes up as the nearest collector. Callers in Northamptonshire have the same issues as they have to look further and further away to find a phone number that is answered. Oxfordshire is its normal somewhat chaotic self and we don't mind collecting swarms from Thame and the villages along the border. Most of the calls so far have come from locations on the western and southern edge of our area.



We also received a call from a lady in Lancashire who had been told by her local council to ring our number??? Sorry fellow members I will be attending all calls from Devon and Cornwall, Spain, and the South of France!!!!!!

Of the calls I have collected myself I have given 7 away to new and existing Association members.

Thanks to everyone who is on the list and particular thanks to those who have dropped what they were doing and attended a swarm at short notice.

If you have any questions or issues with swarming bees please feel free to contact Brian at

brian.bush@btinternet.com

Need extra equipment quickly????

Sean Stephenson has a variety of equipment available and Brian Bush has some new and pre-loved items for sale. See the adverts later in this newsletter

Summer Events, Fetes and Fairs

As we move into summer we are looking forward to attending a number of local events across our region. These events are a great opportunity for us to meet and talk to the general public about all aspects of beekeeping and to sell local honey. The observation hives are always popular with both adults and children. The table below shows the confirmed events for this year. If one of these is your local show then do come along and say hello, or if you have a couple of hours to spare come and help run and/or set up the stall. If you can help out at any of the events just drop me a mail, Chairman@MBBKA.org.uk, and I can put you in touch with the person running the event. Our first call for volunteers is for the Lindengate Fair on the 8th June. This is a busy show with over 1,000 people passing through last year. Even if you are new to beekeeping you will still know a lot more than the general public so please do consider helping out for a couple of hours, they are usually good fun and gives you a chance to speak to other beekeepers.

Date	Venue	Time
8th June	Lindengate Fair Old allotment site, Worlds End Garden Centre, Wendover	12:00 - 16:30
22nd June	Weston Turville Fete Village hall and recreation ground Weston Turville	13:00 - 17:00
29th June	Summer Strawberry Fair Wendover Junior School	12:00 - 15:00
29th June	Bellingdon Summer Fete Bellingdon and Asheridge village Hall	12:30 - 17:00
20th July	The Lee Flower Show The Lee Manor Park	From 13:45
3rd August	Monks Risborough Horticultural Society Football Ground, Peter's Lane Monks Risborough.	11:00 - 17:00
29th August	Bucks County Show Weedon Park, Weedon, Aylesbury	08:00 - 18:00

MBBKA and Bucks County Beekeepers Vacancies

Our Association and the County Association rely on the dedication and hard work of volunteers, both on and off the committees to make them successful. We are currently looking to fill a number of positions

Mid Bucks

Programme secretary; Sarah Turner who has organised our speaker programme for the past 6 years is stepping down as she has served her 6 year term. The role entails contacting potential speakers for our monthly meetings (5 or 6 per autumn/winter season). Potential speakers are usually identified by members of our own or other associations and the programme secretary would then contact them and arrange suitable dates.

Beginners Course Organiser; Our annual beginners course is an important part of our education programme, providing training for 40 new beekeepers each year. We are looking for someone to manage the course organisation for the 6 theory sessions and to work with the education officer and apiary manager for the practical session. The Beginners course organiser will not be required to present at any of the meetings or lead the practical sessions and a full handover will be provided.

Bucks County Beekeepers Association

Secretary; The role of secretary involves taking the minutes at the County Meetings (approximately 6 per year) and acting as the contact point for questions coming into the county. The secretary would then pass these queries to the relevant county committee members to respond.

Vice Chair; This is a new role for the county to provide a contact/stand in if the Chair is not available.

If you are interested in any of these roles (MBBKA or County) please contact me at <mailto:chairman@mbbka.or.uk>.

New Newsletter Editor Required

On a personal note I am cutting back on my commitments to the MBBKA.

As most of you know I fulfil a number of non-committee roles within the Association.

The editing of the newsletter was one I took on from January 2018 because I sensed it was a difficult monthly burden for the Chairman.

I had high hopes of expanding the newsletter to include as much information about the Association and beekeeping in general. I feel that I have succeeded in some of my aims, even if the only feedback I received is light-hearted joking about the number of pages.

The newsletter is only as good as its contributors and many Association members have been most supportive in providing reports and news about club activities.

One member regularly forwards information on scientific articles from all over the world and I have smiled with satisfaction when the BBKA Newsletter landed in my letterbox with a 'hot news' article that we had published in the MBBKA Newsletter 2 months before. I will always be particularly indebted to Sean who has provided content every month.

Over the past 18 months my family circumstances have changed and I feel it would be prudent to find a new editor for January 2020.

My other role is as swarm officer. I have been doing this for at least 5 years and I have thoroughly enjoyed the job most of the time and it has given me a long list of stories to bore you all with at meetings.

I have a significant birthday in January 2020 and found myself questioning the sense in standing a-top a stepladder collecting a swarm the other day

I will see out this swarm season but hope the Association can find a volunteer to take on this role. I am very willing to give help and guidance if someone wants an 'Apprentice Season' and will of course continue to collect.

Apiary - Ex Chalfont's Bee Shed goes up.



Thanks to two teams of volunteers on Thursday evening 23rd who prepared site and put floor down and Saturday morning 25th May who got the shed up and put on temporary roof covering.

It gives us a separate place for storage of equipment frequently used for summer shows and events now. We'll plan how it's used and fitted out after we have proper roof covering on in a few weeks' time.

We may be going for a metal shed to replace the current old wooden one. There will be a decision on which model/type we go for soon.



Exams –

I know Godfrey has passed his Module 1: Honeybee Management exam and got a Distinction. I got a mere Pass, but happy with that. Our thanks to Sean for his help with the study group sessions for this module in preparation for the exam.

Honeybees' waggle dance no longer useful in some cultivated landscapes

by Universitaet Mainz



honeybee performing a waggle dance. Credit: Christoph Grüter

For bees and other social insects, being able to exchange information is vital for the success of their colony. One way honeybees do this is through their waggle dance, which is a unique pattern of behaviour, which probably evolved more than 20 million years ago. A bee's waggle dance tells its sisters in the colony where to find a high-quality source of food. However, in recent years, people have begun to study the actual benefits of this dance language. Biologists at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland and at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU) in Germany have now shed some new light on the benefits and disadvantages of the bee dance.

"To our surprise, we found that bee colonies are more successful at collecting food if they are deprived of their dance language," reported Dr. Christoph Grüter, a behavioural ecologist at Mainz University. One possible reason may be human-induced habitat change. Together with his colleagues in Lausanne, Grüter conducted experiments over several years to examine the effect of the dance language on a colony's success.

There are about 10 species of honeybees that communicate through waggle dancing. However, the vast majority of bees, i.e., more than 500 species of highly social, stingless insects, have no dance language. Thus, Grüter was interested in the benefits the waggle dance brings to colonies, not least because, as a communication strategy, it is relatively time-consuming. Some waggle dances can last only a few seconds, while others may take up to five minutes.

In the experiments, the scientists manipulated the conditions influencing some of the bee colonies in order to confuse and disorientate the dancing bees. Performed under such conditions, the waggle dance no longer made sense to its bee audience. To create these conditions, light was prevented from falling on the honeycombs, and they were also turned into a horizontal position, preventing the bees from using gravity to orientate themselves.

Another particularly important aspect was to take into account their ability to memorize the location of food. "Bees foraging for food have an excellent memory and can recall a rich feeding spot for several days," explained Grüter. Thus, the research team had to prevent foragers performing the waggle dance for 18 days to ensure they could not use their memory to tell other bees where to fly to find the excellent sources of food. Foraging bees are older than other colony members. In their final phase of life, they no longer work in the hive, but go out to collect nectar and pollen. Typically, they are in the last 18 days of their life.



A colony of bees on a horizontal honeycomb. The researchers rotated the honeycombs to lie horizontally, making it impossible for the bees to orientate themselves with the help of light or gravity. The hive was placed on a balance to record variations in biomass weight. Credit: Christoph Grüter

Honeybees with no information from the waggle dance are more effective in challenging conditions

The team of biologists was surprised by their result that beehives without the dance information were more active and produced more honey than beehives that used dance language. "We were expecting to confirm that dance language was important, but our results were the exact opposite," said Dr. Robbie I'Anson Price, lead author of the study. "I suspect that the bees probably lose interest when confronted with a disoriented dance, and they go out to search for food on their own initiative," added Price. The differences are significant: Bees in colonies with no dance language went on foraging flights that were eight minutes longer and yielded 29 percent more honey over the entire 18-day period than bees using the waggle dance.

The conclusion is that some bees, such as the Buckfast bee, a 100-year-old cross-bred western honeybee used in this study, may do better without social communication. Grüter believes that the environment and the availability of food play an important role. If there is a large apple tree in full bloom nearby, then waiting for information on its location is probably a good strategy. If, on the other hand, there is only a sparse scattering of flowering plants on balconies or roadsides, it may be better to leave the hive sooner and forage independently. "In our opinion, the behaviour we observed can be primarily explained in terms of how much time the bees save," said Grüter.



Colonies

of bees on vertical honeycombs, the standard orientation of hives. The hives were placed on balances to record variations in biomass weight. Credit: Christoph Grüter

Bees might be able to learn how to assess the value of waggle dance information

By observing the bees, the scientists made the extraordinary discovery that the bees were apparently able to judge the relevance of the information content of a dance and hence would lose interest in disoriented dancing. "It looks as if after a while they become aware that something is wrong," postulated Grüter. "Our results raise the possibility that humans have created environments to which the waggle dance language is not well adapted," write the authors in their study, recently published in the renowned journal *Science Advances*.

The idea that bees may be capable of evaluating the quality of information in a dance is one that Grüter wants to investigate more closely in the future. He is also planning to repeat the experiments in the Mainz area under different conditions—in urban and rural areas and at different times of the year.

Christoph Grüter has been head of a research team at the Institute of Organismic and Molecular Evolution at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz since 2015. Previously, he was head of a research group at the Department of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. His group investigates how social insects organize and coordinate their collective activities, with communication in insect colonies playing a central role.

How to get all beekeepers a bad name.

Any of you who use The Beekeeping Forum may have noticed a couple of recent threads, started by me, concerning poor beekeeping.

Running the Swarm Line brings me into contact with other beekeepers and their bees.

I would not claim to be the best beekeeper around and we all make mistakes. I have encountered two instances of poor beekeeping and been told of another by Association swarm collectors.

Number1.

Location: Village just across the County Boundary in Oxfordshire.

Issue: Member of public phones to say that a huge swarm of bees is in the air over her garden. I tell her that they will settle somewhere in a cluster in a few minutes. 20 minutes later she phones to say they have settled on the back door of the neighbouring house to the left of hers. I inform her that I cannot enter a garden without the permission of the householder. She says that she will put a note through the door and give them my number if they wish me to collect them.

20 minutes later she rings again to say there is another huge swarm circling her garden. They settle in a cluster in the garden of the house to the right of her property. Note put through the door.

Another phone call informs me she believes there are beehives in her neighbour's garden but there are so many bees in the air she dare not investigate further.

16:00 hrs neighbour to the right rings and says there is a huge swarm clustered in his garden. His wife has taken a photo, sent it to him and evacuated to mothers. I set off to collect. I meet him there and the swarm has moved on. I then remember asking Paul to collect a swarm from nearby a couple of days before.

I am noseey. I introduce myself to the lady who rang earlier and she guides me round to look in the neighbour's garden.

The garden is the width of the house and about 30 ft. deep. I open the gate and pass between an old shed and a greenhouse. The garden is littered with pieces of beehive and in front of me I can see a row of 3 very large beehive on stands. One of the hives is swarming and the garden is black with bees. N closer inspection I realise that I can see 6 beehives. There is one on the roof of each of the ones in the row.

I am without my bee suit but push a little more into the garden to see that there is another row similarly set up. There were definitely 9 hives, more possibly 12. On top of the porch there were 2 NUC boxes. I retreated!

Number 2

Location: hamlet near Beirton

Issue: Jan and Dennie go to collect a swarm from a garden. In the garden are 2 flow hives. They get the swarm in a container and chat to the owner.

Have you been beekeeping long?

When did you last inspect the hives?

Do you belong to the MBBKA?

How did you learn about beekeeping? And so on!!!

I thought it would be great to have beehives in the garden. I bought 2 flow hives and a man from London brought me the bees and put them in the hives.

I didn't know you had to do anything I just thought that was all you had to do.

Do you realise that the hives are overcrowded, brood box and supers full of honey and the other one will swarm any day now?

Perhaps you undertake a course. We can provide you with the local Association details.

Number 3

Location: Brill

Issue: I am a beekeeper in Brill and my bees have swarmed. I have a beekeeping friend here and we have collected a second swarm today and another has appeared in my neighbour's garden. Can you collect it as we have no spare equipment available?

The swarm, probably a large cast is on a tree trunk 18 feet off the ground. A large pair of steps is found and I get them in a box and ask the beekeeper to close the entrance when she picks up her box that evening and I will pick it up the next day.

How long have you been beekeeping?

Two or three years. They have never swarmed before.

When did you last inspect the hives?

Several weeks ago I have been too busy.

Have you undertaken a beginner's course?

Yes I did one run by the Oxfordshire Beekeepers.

So you are a member of Oxfordshire Beekeepers.

Well no. They offer very little so I and a friend joined the Buckingham Group.

I have been called back twice in the last week to the same garden to pick up cast swarms. The householder is an elderly lady. She keeps apologising for calling me out.

She is becoming worried. She has a beautiful garden she maintains by herself and spends all day out there. She has been stung by aggressive guard bees from the hives on the other side of the wall.

All 3 of these cases have some points in common. In all 3 cases the beekeeper has little care for the welfare of the bees or the neighbours.

What can be done?

NOTHING!!!!

These are selfish beekeepers. In 2 of the 3 cases they definitely are not members of the BBKA and I doubt that any of them have registered their hives on BeeBase. If there is a disease outbreak the inspectorate will not know they are there.

I am strong believer in small government and would normally question licensing and registration. Now, however, strongly believe that you should not be allowed to keep bees without training and a registration or licence!!

Winter Programme 2019 -2020

Sarah has just released the list of speakers for our winter programme later this year.

September: Jemma Batten on The Bee Roads Project

November: Professor Stevenson on Toxicology

January: Dr Tom Wood on Challenges that intensive agricultural beekeeping poses

February: Dr Mike Garratt and Elena Ciri on Bee health and crop pollination, the latest research from Reading University

March: Margaret Murdin on Bee genetics

April: Members' papers/talks

After 6 years in the role Sarah is stepping down as programme secretary at the next AGM. On behalf of all association members who have attended the winter association meetings, I would like to thank Sarah for organising the interesting and varied speaker programme we have enjoyed over the past 6 years. If anyone would be interested in volunteering for the role of programme secretary going forward please contact me at Chairman@MBBKA.org.uk.

Earning a bee's wings

In hives, graduating to forager a requirement for social membership

It is a classic coming-of-age story, in many ways.

A honey bee hatches and grows up deep inside a hive. Surrounded by 40,000 of her closest relatives, this dark and constantly buzzing place is all that she knows. Only after she turns 21 days old does she leave the nest to look for pollen and nectar. For her, this is a moment of great risk, and great reward.

It's also the moment at which she becomes recognizable to other bees, according to new research from Washington University in St. Louis. A study in the journal *eLife* reports that honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) develop different scent profiles as they age, and the gatekeeper bees at the hive's door respond differently to returning foragers than they do when they encounter younger bees who have never ventured out before.

This work offers new insight into one of the most important interactions in the lives of social insects: recognizing self and other.

Until this point, most bee researchers thought bees recognize and respond to a scent that is the homogenized scent of all of the members of their own colony. That's how it works for some ants and other insects, at least. But new work from the laboratory of Yehuda Ben-Shahar, associate professor of biology in Arts & Sciences, shows that nestmate recognition instead depends on an innate developmental process that is associated with age-dependent division of labor. The work was completed in collaboration with researchers from the lab of Joel Levine at the University of Toronto.

"It was always assumed that the way that honey bees acquire nestmate recognition cues, their cuticular hydrocarbon (CHC) profiles, is through these mechanisms where they rub up against each other, or transfer compounds between each other," said Cassondra L. Vernier, a graduate student at Washington University and first author of the new study.

"You would expect, then, that even younger bees would have a very similar pheromonal profile as older bees. When in fact that is not what we saw," she said.

Vernier compared the CHC profiles of bees on the day they were born and at 1 week, 2 weeks, and 3 weeks old. The 3-week-old bees had significantly different profiles than their younger siblings.

A 3-week-old foraging bee also has a very different job to support the hive than a younger bee -- one who spends her time as a nurse caring for bee larvae and building the waxy honeycomb structures in the hive.

The researchers wanted to separate out whether the differences they saw were based on age alone, or were somehow tied to the older bees' foraging activities. Bees that exit the hive to collect nectar encounter lots of scents on flowers and other surfaces they touch. They also are exposed to different environmental factors such as sunshine and rain that could affect their body coatings.

So Vernier also compared the CHC profiles of foraging-age bees that were held in the hive and not permitted to forage with bees that were able to venture out. These two groups were also significantly different.

"What we found is that it's actually a combination of both -- of being at the age for foraging, and actually performing the foraging activities," said Ben-Shahar.

Guards are gatekeepers; specific triggers still unknown

Importantly, not every bee notices the difference in scent profiles. Guard bees are the only ones who care to identify outsiders.

"They sit in the entrance and they have a very specific posture," Ben-Shahar said of the guards. "They're very attentive. Their forelegs are usually raised, and they're very alert. Still, it is hard to know who they are until they react to somebody."

Place a 1-day-old, 1-week-old, or 2-week-old outsider on the stoop in front of a guard, and she is likely to be able to waltz on through. But it's a different story after 3 weeks of age -- when guards bite, sting and/or drag outsiders away from the door.

"Nestmate recognition is something that is very context-specific. It involves an interaction between very specific bees within the colony," Ben-Shahar said. "Most bees are completely oblivious. Most colony members don't produce the signal that tells anyone if they belong or not, and they don't care about the signal. They don't react to it."

As an important caveat, the new study does not directly address the mechanism by which cue specificity is determined in bees. Which specific components of the honey bee CHC profile represent the nestmate recognition cue remains unknown.

"Something environmentally related is causing expression-level changes in the CHC profiles of the bees," Vernier said. "That's our model for now."

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The bees in this study were kept in two different locations: Tyson Research Centre, the environmental field station for Washington University in St. Louis, and an amateur beekeeper's private residence in University City, MO.

VIDEO AVAILABLE: <https://vimeo.com/317352725>

Do You Know Your BHM's, (Bee Health Mentors), and their role.

Over the past few years there have been increasing pressures on the National Bee Unit Inspectors, partly from budget restrictions but also from the increasing numbers of new beekeepers taking up the craft.

It has been recognised for some time that the beekeeping associations will need to play a more active part in mentoring novice beekeepers for disease recognition and control, allowing the NBU inspectors to concentrate on foul brood and other statutory threats.

The Bucks County Scheme

To differentiate this from any NBU scheme and to allay any possible concerns about legal liability, the term "Bee Health Mentors" (BHM) will be used. This should also describe their role more accurately.

Any local beekeeper who is concerned about disease in a colony should be encouraged to contact first their local BHM. The procedures to be followed will be described in process document. The following principles must be made clear both to the mentors and the beekeepers who contact them.

1. Mentors are fellow beekeepers who are offering their help voluntarily. They should not be regarded as "experts" or "consultants" in the legal sense.
2. Mentors have no connection with the National Bee Unit and possess no statutory authority of any kind.
3. Mentors cannot, and must not, insist on visiting a beekeeper's apiary; visits will take place only at the express invitation of the beekeeper.
4. If foul brood or any other statutory condition is suspected the onus remains firmly with the beekeeper to report this to the NBU inspector.
5. Mentors will respect the confidentiality of the beekeepers who contact them.

Most bee disease problems can be alleviated by good management. Novice beekeepers in their first few years are often unsure whether they have a diseases problem or not and the availability of a mentor who can offer reassurance and guidance on good practice could be very valuable.

Your BHM's are, Jonathan Palmer and Brian Bush

Sean's Foundation 2019 Price List

I always keep spare stock of foundation, frames and hive parts. The foundation is particularly well priced. If you are in a rush for an item of Beekeeping equipment please contact me as I may already have it.

Item	Price
Foundation	
Brood 14 x12, wired, 10 sheets	£17.50
Brood Deep National wired, 10 sheets	£10.50
Super wired, 10 sheets	£6.70
Super unwired, 10 sheets	£5.50
Frames (seconds)	
14 x 12, per 10 frames	£11.50
DN4/5, per 10 frames	£10.00
SN1, per 10 frames	£8.00
Hive Parts	
National Brood Box	£30.00
National Super	£20.00
Open Mesh Floor (Pine)	£21.00
Framed queen excluder	£17.00
Other Hive parts and Beekeeping bits	Price on Request

Contact: Sean Stephenson, sean@wendover.co.uk or 07867787800

Advertisement



All prices are approximate due to price variation in WRC. All items assembled using waterproof glue stainless steel screws.

Contact Brian at brian.bush@btinternet.com or phone 07767304067



Are You Registered?

Registering your hives on BeeBase is free. You will be automatically informed of disease outbreaks. The Bee Inspectorate may include you in their testing surveys which can be most helpful. Subsidy from the EU, which helps pay for the NBU, is based on the number of hives registered nationally. (<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com>)

Every colony needs to be recorded on BeeBase, log on [here](#) and update records if necessary.

Following our AGM our Committee for 2018/2019

CHAIRMAN	HELEN PALMER
VICE CHAIRMAN	CAROLINE WINDLEY
SECRETARY	GODFREY CLEMENTS
TREASURER	ANDREW SMITH
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	JONATHAN PALMER
APIARY MANAGER	KEVIN CRANGLES
PROGRAMME SECRETARY	SARAH TURNER
LIBRARIAN	JOHN THEOBOLD
HONEY SHOW SECRETARY	RUTH STEPHENSON
EDUCATION OFFICER	JONATHAN MATTHEWS
NOVICE BEE KEEPER	ROB SPILLER
COMMITTEE MEMBER	DORRIE TUTTON
COMMITTEE MEMBER	PAUL SPENCER
COMMITTEE MEMBER	TINA HOOD-LILES

Brian Bush will continue as Swarm Officer for another year and will continue to try to edit the Association Newsletter. These are non-committee posts.

Out Apiaries

We continue to receive offers from members of the public with potential apiary sites. One of the latest being is below

Hello,

I wonder if you can help?

I have some land which I would like to offer to a bee keeper to keep some hives on. It's around 14 acres in total, near a very large lake, I have some mature gardens, small orchard. I've just planted 2 acres of new trees. It's not farmed at all. I cut the field grass on it once or twice a year I think it's an ideal habitat for bees and want to help. Do you know anyone who may be interested?

Cheers

**Andy
Old Stable Yard
Wotton Underwood
Aylesbury
HP18 0SB**

Tel: 01296 612065

We now have more than 14 available sites across the whole area that Mid Bucks covers. John Dadswell, our President, is the custodian of the list of potential sites. There is a spreadsheet on Dropbox.

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.

Coincidence or Hornet Defence by Sean Stephenson

Several years ago, at the National Honey Show I attended a lecture concerning a research project in Vietnam where the *Apis mellifera* honey bees were known to cover the front of their hives with manure as a successful defence against the Giant Asian Hornet.



I recently put out 8 mating nucs populated with young bees and mature queen cells. The mating area is cool shaded area away from the main apiary. All the mating nucs were clean and it was their first time they had been out this season.

The mating apiary was being visited by a queen hornet (*Vespa crabro*), her flight was swift and passed the same two nucs. Each of these nucs had surrounded their entrance with a



brown sticking substance. All the other nuc entrances remained clean. Now the hornet is no longer visiting the area the nuc entrances have been cleaned up by the bees.

Is this a coincidence of a defence?

Association Apiary Meeting 19th June

The Association Apiary meeting on 19th June will be themed on raising queens for the small apiary. The idea is that we will go through raising queen cells through to mating queens. In order to have mature queens ready for the evening we will be setting up some colonies to raise queen cells on Monday 10th June.

If you would like to come along and help set up the colonies please drop me an email at sean@wendover.co.uk. There will be New Beekeeper training running on the same evening so numbers will be limited.

As well as demonstrating the practical side of raising queens I hope we will all have the opportunity to practice (on drones) marking and clipping queens.

Clipping Queens

Last Saturday on my way to an appointment I could not miss I saw my best colony attempt to swarm. The colony was headed by a yellow queen from LASI that I raise all my new queens from in a double brood box with 20 frames of brood,

Did I panic? No. Went to my meeting and on my return checked out the colony.

I was confident the colony would be fine and sure enough the hive was full of bees and all was good, except no queen. Whenever I inspect a colony I always have a glance through the mesh floor to check on any activity. On this occasion I could see a black mass of bees through the mesh, it was the remnants of the attempted swarm.



The queen was clipped and when a colony attempts to swarm with a clipped queen she generally ends up with a cluster of bees under the mesh floor. The queen being in this location makes her easy to collect and it seems to have a calming effect on the colony.

To collect the "swarm" simply move the brood box to one side and shake the queen and cluster of bees into a nucleus box returning the floor and brood box to the original position.

I clip all my queens in out apiaries and will clip the vast majority in my home apiary. Sometimes if I have a new queen late in the season I will leave the clipping to the new year.

Going by the number of calls this year from local beekeepers looking for new queens I would recommend considering clipping your queens, it is simple to do, quick, does not unduly harm the queen and it can save a colony.