



# Welcome to the December Issue of the MBBKA Newsletter.

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Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association  
December 2019 Newsletter



## Editorial

This will be my last effort as editor of the MBBKA Newsletter. I am handing over to Godfrey for the New Year.

I have been editor for 2 years and have found the task both enjoyable and frustrating in equal measure. All I hope for is that you, the readers, have found some of the content interesting and useful.

I want to thank the Association members and others who have provided articles and pieces of interest. The Committee members have been excellent in forwarding information to keep us all aware of the variety of Association events.

A particular thank you to our Chairmen, Sean and Helen who have chased me up, proof-read and published the Newsletter.

I have been most grateful to Sean who has continued to provide advice on hive manipulation, bee care etc. almost every month. He has come to the rescue on several occasions when I have felt that we were lacking in practical content.

I am sorry but you will still be hearing from me. Godfrey has invited me to write a few paragraphs each month on my musings about the bees. If I can scrounge the materials to build a larger shed in my apiary I believe Mrs B may banish me and I will spend more time watching my girls.

**MAY I WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND YOU AND YOUR  
BEES A WONDERFUL 2020!!!**

In this Newsletter there is a reminder that membership renewals are due and information about the Bucks County Seminar that is only a few weeks away.

## What are you doing with your bees at present?

Normally at this time of year I leave my bees unmolested. In the last issue I reminded everyone that in some hives stores were very low and we need to monitor them regularly.

I identified the mild weather and continuous rain in October as the cause of this consumption and November weather has been much the same.

I checked a few hives 10 days ago and the bees were not tightly clustered and were active on the frames.

Loose clustering and activity lead to the consumption of more stores. The weather is mild, 12<sup>0</sup>C yesterday and my bees were flying. I saw Jan in the evening and she confirmed that hers had flown on Monday and a reporter on the forum said that his bees were bringing in pollen.

I am concerned that there may still be substantial amounts of brood in some hives. This has 2 implications for us as beekeepers. Firstly stores will be used up rapidly and secondly application of Varroa treatments may be rendered ineffective.

Varroa treatment with Oxalic Acid, whether by vaping or dribbling, is only effective when the mites are in their phoretic stage and attached to the bees. If there is brood present the mites will be in the sealed brood.

We were told by a speaker a few years ago that the earlier in the winter we treated the hives the better the Spring build-up. I modified my practice to try and treat them in early December rather than post-Christmas and this has been successful for me. Unless we have several days of colder weather to ensure the queen stops laying I may have to open the hives twice. The first time to uncap sealed brood and a couple of days later to treat with the oxalic acid product.

A reminder here. You should only use approved OA products such as OxyBee and ApiBioxal. You must also keep a record of the treatment date.

## Jobs for December and January

There are always other jobs you can be doing to ensure that you have everything available, when required, in the Spring.

I spent 2 days last week cleaning frames and melting the old wax to make into blocks to trade for new foundation next year.

I normally do the exchange at the Beetradox with is on 14<sup>th</sup>. March next year.

The frames I will boil in washing sodaprobably next week, when Andrew Smith will hopefully join me to do his. When the boiler is bubbling it only takes a few minutes to dissolve all the wax and propolis on a batch of frames and they can be repaired and re-used.

I have a workshop with stacks of part finished hives and stands. I collected some Western red Cedar from my supplier in Usk a fortnight ago. I was pleased I was buying by the metre. It was so wet that it was particularly heavy and as Sean Kirwan says you would not wish to 'buy it by the litre'! It is now stacked under cover and drying slowly.

If Santa brings you flat-packed hives put them together as soon as you can. Use waterproof glue and stainless steel screws. Hives will last for many years but they will start to rot around nails and in gaps not sealed with glue. I treat the outside with decking oil to enhance the appearance and ensure the timber is waterproof.

Make your plans for next year. Are you going to increase your number of hives and apiaries? If you are looking for a new apiary site John Dadswell maintains a list of them. Now is a good time to go on a 'scouting mission' and prepare a new site.

## News

Have you seen the reports this week in many Newspapers regarding the Food Standards Agency investigation of adulteration in honey being sold by Tesco? In an earlier Newsletter I reported the rejection of honey entries at the Apimondia due to adulteration. There are several new tests of honey developed over recent years. There have been scandals in the USA where the Mafia have been implicated in the importation of millions of dollars' worth of 'Fake Honey'. I one case fake honey with a market value of \$800,000,000 was found.

It is not difficult to imagine that supermarket honey at less than £2 per jar may not be exactly what it claims. I have read articles that say that more 'Manuka Honey' is consumed in the UK than is produced in New Zealand!

A short survey by me, of the products available on the Supermarket shelf threw up cases of labelling that did not conform to the regulations. Similarly the honey being sold in a local farm store, not by a MBBKA member, was not correctly labelled.

We as Beekeepers need to ensure that we take every opportunity to educate the public. We sell a premium product and we need to ensure our labelling meets all the requirements.

# OLD F\*\*\*S ALMANACK

## Predictions for 2020

- There will be periods of rain and sunshine in 2020
- Some of our colonies could have high Varroa loads due to unsuccessful treatments.
- Nosema may be an issue as Fumidil has not been available.
- There may be a large number of swarms unless we have a cold spell. The very cold Spring of 2018 knocked back the number of swarms but many of the surviving queens will now be old or superseded by vigorous young queens and decide to swarm this year.
- Jonathan Palmer will still be chasing membership renewals in March 2020
- The price of honey will rise if shop sold honey is rigorously tested. Food Safety officers will use the new tests at their disposal and try to end this scandal.
- And finally: We will all experience moments of Delight and Despair looking after our bees!!!!

‘Beekeeping is a series of mishaps, near disasters and bodes’!!!!

## Busy Bees in Long Crendon Make Beeswax Wraps

10 children from years 2 to 6 in Long Crendon School's Eco Club recently held two sessions making beeswax food wraps. They made 24 wraps in total, becoming more efficient in the second session as they got the hang of it! The children all loved making them, and, hopefully, they will now be able to use less cling film!





Bucks County Beekeeping Association

23rd Annual Seminar

8th February 2020

Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Rd Wendover HP22 6EF  
10:00 for tea and coffee, seminar starts at 10:30.

# BEES, WASPS AND BUTTERFLIES

**BOB SMITH, NDB**

8mm of Nothing, nothing at all!

**DR SERIAN SUMNER**

Wasps - why nobody loves them?

**DR NICK ISSAC**

Where have all our Pollinators Gone?

Free tea, coffee and cakes throughout the day and a ploughmans lunch  
Tickets only

**£15**

**Book via Eventbrite - <http://tiny.cc/Bucks2020>**



## MBBKA Membership Renewals

MBBKA memberships are due for renewal on 1st January 2020 and I will be sending out e-mails to all members in early December inviting renewal. As agreed at the AGM in October, we will be keeping the membership rates at the same level as the last four years: Full Membership £30, Family Membership £45 and Associate Membership £12.

As we did last year, the renewal form will be available in two formats. The first is, as in previous years, a pdf file that can be printed, completed and either scanned and returned by e-mail or posted. There is also an Excel form that can be completed electronically (and I've corrected the error that prevented leading zeros being entered for a mobile phone number last year!) and simply returned to me as a mail attachment.

Again, as last year, please do complete and return a membership form in order to give positive consent to MBBKA storing personal information. This is required in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that came into effect in May 2018. So please do complete the form and return it in any of the many ways possible to me. Linked to the GDPR requirements, the MBBKA Privacy Policy is available to view [here](#). There is also a link to this on the renewal forms.

Lastly, can I also mention that MBBKA expects all those members who keep bees to register all their apiaries on the National Bee Unit's [BeeBase](#). In addition to providing the beekeeper - new or experienced - with useful information and guidance, it is the only way to ensure that you can be contacted by your local Authorised Bee Inspector if there is disease in the area. I know a number beekeepers do not feel comfortable having their apiaries "on the system" but it is the only way that a disease outbreak can be managed effectively and efficiently - something that is in all our interests.

Please remember to look out for the renewal invitation mails in your inboxes in early December. They are also available on the Association's [website here](#) if anyone would like to get in early!!

Jonathan Palmer  
MBBKA Membership Secretary.

## MBBKA Library Books

Many thanks to everyone who has returned or let us know that they have one of the MBBKA library books. There are still a number unaccounted for and some of these are especially useful for our beginners. The missing books are listed below and those highlighted in red are the ones that are of particular use for our next intake of beginners. Can I ask you once again to check your bookcase, the MBBKA books will have the library number written on the cover, and let us know if you have them?

Thank you

<b>MBBKA Library Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
4	Brewing Mead	
18	Anatomy and dissection of the honey bee	H A Dade
27	Honey by the ton	Oliver field
55	The behaviour and social life of the honey bee	R Ribbands
66	Beekeeping study notes Modules 1,2,3 and 4	Yates
96	Bee improvement Magazine Autumn 2006	BIBBA
97	Bee improvement Magazine Summer 2006	BIBBA
98	Guide to bees and honey 4th edition	Ted Hooper
101	Practical beekeeping	Clive De Bruyn
103	Practical beekeeping	Clive De Bruyn
108	Super formulas	Elaine C White
121	Keeping Bees & Making Honey	Benjamin & McCallum
129	The honey Bee	James Gould Carol Grant Gould
130	Starting out with bees	John Williams
136	A Practical Manual of Beekeeping	David Cramp
151	The Hive	Bee Wilson
167	Bees at the bottom of the garden	Alan Campion
168	Bees at the bottom of the garden	Alan Campion
173	Haynes Bee Manual	Claire & Adrian Waring
134	Anatomy of the Honey Bee	Snodgrass
178	The BBKA Guide to Beekeeping - second edition	Ivor Davis & Roger Cullum-Kenyon
186	Haynes Bee Manual	Claire & Adrian Waring

## **November Meeting : Professor Stevenson**

### **Title: Sex, Drugs and Ecosystem Services: the surprising effects of plant toxins in nectar on bees.**

**We had the largest audience I can remember. Over 50 members came to hear Phil's talk. Those who misread and came for the Sex and Drugs were not disappointed!!!**

Phil's talk held me spell-bound for the whole hour. The results of his studies and those of his colleagues were presented in a most interesting and informative manner. I was so engrossed I stopped taking notes but I was assured that Phil's slides and notes will be available for us to view.

I learned a tremendous amount about this exciting field of study. Some of the old stories about bees were put into context.

- Destruction of a Roman Army
- Dead bumble bees under certain trees.
- Environmental adaption of rhododendron species
- Rhododendron toxin tolerance of the Caucasian Honey Bee

Caffeine assists the memory of bees and influences their foraging habits. Trees such as Lime, (Linden) produce caffeine in their flowers and bumble bees are often found dead in large numbers underneath these trees because they become so addicted they do not switch to another food source when flowering ceases. Using this caffeine stimulus pollinator bees in poly-tunnels can be trained to forage and pollinate a single species.

January: Dr Tom Wood 'Pesticides and Honeybees'.

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

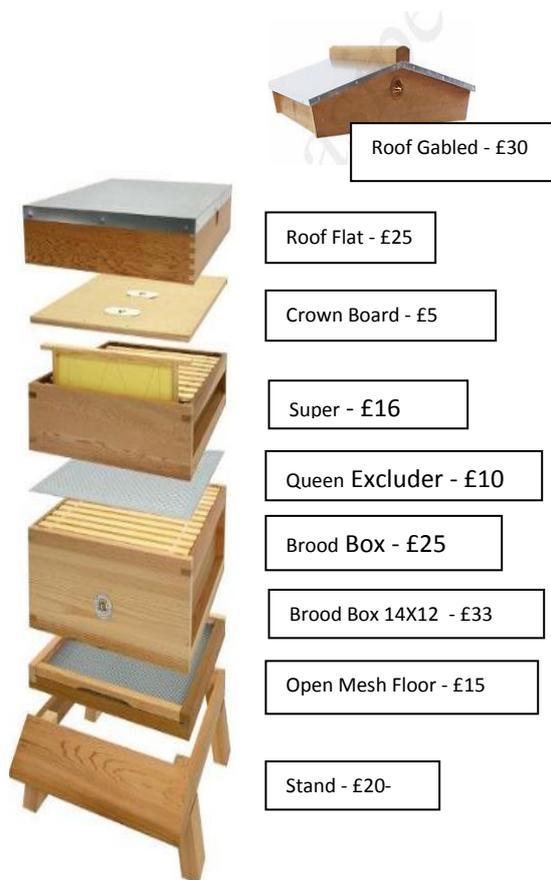
March: Margaret Murdin on Bee genetics

April: Members' papers/talks

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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](mailto:Chairman@MBBKA.org.uk).

# Advertisement



I have this attractive Double Brood Box,  
Highly Insulated 8 frame per box Cottage  
Beehive for Sale

£125.00 ONO

I also have some hive stands for sale.



Single hive stand, as pictured, **£17:50**  
Double hive stand: **£25:00**

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](mailto:brian.bush@btinternet.com) or phone 07767304067

## 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
<b>Foundation</b>	
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
<b>Frames (seconds)</b>	
14 x 12, per 10 frames	£11.50
DN4/5, per 10 frames	£10.00
SN1, per 10 frames	£8.00
<b>Hive Parts</b>	
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](mailto:sean@wendover.co.uk) or 07867787800



## 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 2019/2020

Chairman	Helen Palmer
Vice-Chairman	Godfrey Clements
Secretary	Godfrey Clements
Treasurer	Andrew Smith
Apiary Manager	Kevin Crangles
Membership Secretary	Jonathan Palmer
Programme Secretary	Liz Tice
Librarian	Jon Theobald
Honey Show Secretary	Ruth Stephenson
Education Officer	Jonathan Matthews
Novice Bee Keeper	Anton Chambers
Committee Member	Sarah Turner
Committee Member	Tina Hood-Liles
Committee Member	Paul Spencer

Brian Bush will continue as Swarm Officer for another year T is a non-committee post.

## Out Apiary Sites

**At the Bucks County Show on the 29th August some visitors to our stand offered a number of new sites for out apiaries.**

The first is a 30 acre nature reserve been developed in the Lee, Great Missenden.

The second is a 17 acre meadow in Brill to the West of Aylesbury.

The third is a new woodland and meadow are at Edgecott

Please contact John Dadswell if you are interested as John keeps a list of all the sites that have been offered.

Dear Fellow Beekeepers,

## **West Sussex BKA Annual Convention – Saturday 29th February 2020**

**Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1LZ**

**Not to be missed!**

We again have a renowned group of speakers and an impressive mix of lectures and seminars with something for everyone. Our main speakers are Marin Anastasov NDB, Professor Robert Pickard and Dr Anna Oliver.

A simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers from around the county and beyond. As always, Paynes Southdown Bee Farms will bring a range of equipment and books to the Convention for you to purchase.

We have already had a lot of interest in the event and encourage your members to book early to ensure that they secure a place on their preferred seminars.

Full details are now on the website with speakers' profiles and a Booking Form to download:

[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html)

*Graham*

Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

[www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)