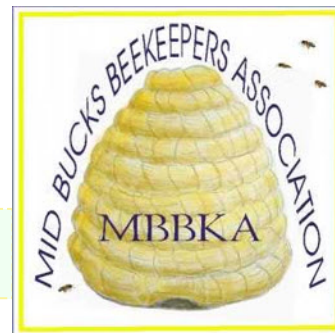


Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association



Newsletter for April 2011

Colony Losses Survey 2011

Spring has come at last and what a fabulous March we had! Colonies are building up strongly so be prepared for some early swarms this year.

In April we conduct our annual **Colony Losses Survey**. For three years now we have recorded how many colonies were lost between **1st November** and **15th April**. By recording the same period each year we are building up a valuable database that we can use to see how trends are going year by year.

Indications are that this winter has been much better than the previous two so I hope that is reflected in the figures. This year, all the four Associations in Buckinghamshire are doing surveys over the same time period so we will be able to compare the different areas of the county. Please fill in the form sent by email with this newsletter or complete the form given on page 3.

On **Wednesday 20th April** we have our last evening meeting of the winter season and it promises to be a real treat. There has been a lot of publicity recently about how bees can be trained to detect very low quantities of dangerous substances like drugs and explosives. A team at Rothamsted Research have developed ways of training bees and measuring their responses. **Mathilde Briens**, the leader of the team will explain their techniques and describe some of the many possible applications.

During the summer we are planning a full schedule of events at the **Association Apiary**. The timetable is given on page 2 of this newsletter.

Future Events

Tuesday 19th April

"Varroa – the fightback"

by **Dr. Alan Bowman, Aberdeen University**

Meeting of the Chalfonts Beekeepers Association

at St. Joseph's Priory, Austenwood Lane,
Chalfont St. Peter, SL9 8RY.

Wednesday 20th April

"Sniffer Bees"

by **Mathilde Briens**, Inscentinel Ltd.

7:30 pm at the Bowls Club
(see notice on this page)

Saturday 7th May

Woodworking day

Mill House Farm, Risborough Road, Stoke Mandeville

Assembly of hive boxes and preparation of frames.

(see notice on page 2)

Saturday 11th June

Disease Day

10 am - 4 pm at the Bowls Club

Identification and control of the main bee diseases

Next Meeting **"Sniffer Bees"** by **Mathilde Briens** **Inscentinel Ltd.**

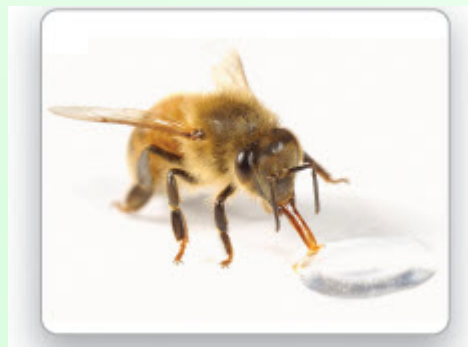
Wednesday 20th April
at 7:30pm in the Bowls Club

Mathilde Briens leads a team at **Rothamsted Research** who have developed techniques to train honey bees to detect specific odours.

Groups of 36 bees can be quickly trained to respond to very low concentrations of specific odours. Once trained, they extend their proboscis whenever the target odour is detected and the movement is picked up by sensors.

After a period of time, the bees are returned to their colony unharmed.

Mathilde Briens will explain how the techniques were developed and describe some of the many applications the "sniffer bees" are able to tackle.



More overpage ...



Super Frame Competition

There is still time to enter our competition for the best Super Frame.

You will be given a super frame (un-assembled) with a code number on it. You must assemble the frame with the supplied foundation and place it in one of your colonies.

At the AGM in October, the **same frame** must be returned, whatever its condition, and we will give prizes for:

- The heaviest frame
- The most attractive looking frame
- The least attractive looking frame

It will cost £2 to enter and you keep the frame afterwards. The last date for entry will be at the meeting on Wednesday 20th April.

Woodworking day Saturday 7th May

To help new beekeepers with making up hive boxes, frames and other bits of beekeeping woodwork, Sean Stephenson will be running a "Woodworking Workshop" on **Saturday 7th May** at **Mill House Farm, Risborough Road, Stoke Mandeville, HP22 5XL** starting at 10 am. It will finish at about 3 pm.

We will have some apiary equipment available for assembly but if you have recently purchased a flat packed hive, bring it along and we will help with the assembly.

Mill House Farm is on the A4010 Stoke Mandeville to Princes Risborough road, about ½ mile outside Stoke Mandeville, opposite the Bucks Goat Centre.

We are very grateful to John Applegarth for allowing us to use his workshop facilities.

Basic Assessment

Each year we run a short course for members who are interested in taking the BBKA Basic Assessment.

We strongly advise everyone who has kept bees for 1-2 years to take the Basic Assessment.

It is an excellent refresher course and the practical part of the assessment improves confidence in handling bees.

The course is held over four evening meetings in May and the assessment will take place at the Association Apiary during July or August.

A few people have already expressed interest in this year's course. If you haven't already contacted me, please do so by email at chairman@mbbka.org.uk or phone 01494 866516.

Apiary Meetings during 2011

We shall be holding regular meetings at the Association Apiary throughout the summer, catering for new and more experienced beekeepers.

The calendar is given below.

Wed 27-Apr	6:00 pm	Advanced
Wed 04-May	6:00 pm	Beginner
Sat 07-May	10:00 am	Hardware Day ¹
Thu 12-May	6:00 pm	Beginner
Wed 18-May	6:00 pm	Beginner
Wed 25-May	6:00 pm	Advanced
Thu 02-Jun	6:30 pm	Beginner
Wed 08-Jun	6:30 pm	Beginner
Thu 16-Jun	6:30 pm	Beginner
Wed 22-Jun	6:30 pm	Advanced
Wed 29-Jun	6:30 pm	Beginner
Thu 07-Jul	6:30 pm	Beginner
Wed 13-Jul	6:30 pm	Beginner
Thu 21-Jul	6:30 pm	Beginner
Wed 27-Jul	tba	Honey Extraction ²

1 Held at Mill House Farm 2 Venue to be announced

The "**Beginner**" sessions are primarily for members who have been doing this year's Beginners Course. Spaces at these sessions are limited so if you have not already put your name down, please contact Clare Hayward-Smith on **01494 488701** or email courses@mbbka.org.uk.

During the summer we plan to hold additional sessions for members who have joined recently but were unable to take the course this year.

The "**Advanced**" sessions are for people who already have bees and will cover more advanced techniques and will also provide apiary experience for those taking the Basic Assessment.

School Visits

This year we have a very enthusiastic team of beekeepers who are able to take our observation hive of bees into schools and talk to the children about how honey bees live and how important they are to the environment.

We talk to groups of children of all ages from Reception Class to Secondary School. If you have children or grandchildren at any of the local schools and think they would benefit by learning more about bees, why not talk to their teachers and suggest they contact us?

Visits are arranged by **Vanessa Rickett**, tel. **01494 866516**. She can also be contacted via my email at chairman@mbbka.org.uk.

Please complete the Colony Losses Survey. We need as many beekeepers as possible to respond in order to make the figures meaningful.

If you are on email, you can reply directly to the message sent with this newsletter, otherwise, please use the form on the next page.

Frank Rickett, Chairman

Tel: 01494 866516 Email: chairman@mbbka.org.uk



Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association



Colony Losses Survey 2011

Name _____

Number of queenright colonies on 1st November 2010 _____

Number of queenright colonies on 15th April 2011 _____

Observations about losses _____

Suspected reasons for losses _____

Please return completed form to: Frank Rickett, Fairholme, Perks Lane, Prestwood, Bucks HP16 0JQ
email : chairman@mbbka.org.uk

The results are confidential. The only reason why we ask you to include your name is to avoid counting the same beekeeper twice.