

Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association

Newsletter for February 2011

BBKA Pesticide issue at last laid to rest

At the Annual Delegates Meeting on 15th January, the controversy over the BBKA endorsing certain pesticide products was finally over.

Two propositions were put forward to effect this change. The first asked delegates to support a comprehensive review by BBKA trustees of the ways in which the intellectual property of the Association, including use of the logo, was managed. As part of this review, the endorsement of pesticides was to end.

The second proposition was put forward by Twickenham and Thames Valley beekeepers requiring the BBKA to end all commercial relationships with "agrochemical and associated companies". Many delegates felt that the wording was too broad and could prohibit many beneficial activities so an amended resolution was proposed as follows:

"That the BBKA cease any commercial relationships with agrochemical or associated companies relating to the use of the BBKA logo for the endorsement of pesticides (for money or any other form of remuneration) as soon as contractually possible".

The amended resolution, which was supported by us in Buckinghamshire, was passed by a large majority and has already been put into effect so, hopefully, the pesticide issue can now be put behind us.

The other key proposition that will affect us all is the raising of the annual BBKA subscription from £14 to £15.

As the Bucks delegate I supported this for the following reasons.

1. BBKA membership has now increased to 20,000 and it has become necessary to employ a full-time General Secretary / Operations Manager to improve the running of the Association.
2. The budget for BBKA News has been increased. Later this year it will start to be issued monthly and will be printed in full colour.
3. Subscriptions have not gone up for the past three years and the increase is less than the rate of inflation over that period.

Members will benefit particularly from the changes to BBKA News. It will soon be delivered every month instead of every second month and will have full colour. It will then be possible to break up large blocks of text with pictures, making it easier to read.

Future Events

Saturday 5th March

Bucks County Beekeepers Seminar

Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover

See page 2 for more details

Wednesday 16th March

"An Evening with Roger Evans, Master Thatcher"

7:30 pm at the Bowls Club

Friday 15th April to Sunday 17th April

BBKA Spring Convention

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire

Wednesday 20th April

"Sniffer Bees"

by **Mathilde Briens**, Insc Sentinel Ltd.

7:30 pm at the Bowls Club



Next Meeting

"Honeybee population dynamics"

by **Peter Kennedy & Matthias Becher**
Rothamsted Research

Wednesday 16th February
at 7:30pm in the Bowls Club

After a gap of many years, honeybee research has now started again at Rothamsted.

The availability of forage, particularly in areas where there is a lot of arable farming, can have an important effect on the build-up of colonies. Similarly, the presence of disease strongly influences bee populations. When trying to understand the dynamics of bee populations it is important to be able to consider both factors together.

Peter Kennedy and **Matthias Becher** are working in the team led by Juliet Osborne. They are studying how conditions inside and outside the hive can be integrated into a computer model which might be used to predict the effects on honeybee colonies of changes in agricultural practice and the prevalence of disease.

We have always maintained a close interest in honeybee research at Rothamsted and this will be an excellent opportunity to find out more about one of the major projects that they are currently undertaking.

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Bucks County Beekeepers Seminar

The annual BCBKA seminar takes place on **Saturday 5th March** at the Wendover Memorial Hall, 10 am - 4pm.

As always, there is a fascinating lineup of speakers.

Dr. Nigel Raine, from London University, has been in the news recently with his studies on how bees navigate efficiently from flower to flower.

Communication between bees inside the hive has been studied intensively but less is known about how they operate outside the hive. Do they simply move at random from flower to flower or is there a method in their foraging?

Pesticide problems are very much in the news at the moment and so are the problems with the decline in our insect pollinators. The talks by Dominic Dyer and Stuart Roberts are therefore very topical.

The cost of the day is **£12** which includes lunch and refreshments. We are very fortunate in having this seminar held so close to home. Even if you are one of our newer members and do not already have your own bees, please come along, I am sure you will find it very interesting.

The full programme is given on the next page. You must register in advance by phoning **John Catton** tel: **01494 726616** or email richard.catton1@ntlworld.com



The Asian Hornet - *Vespa velutina*

The Asian hornet was inadvertently introduced to France in 2005 and has since spread rapidly. Although it is still confined mainly to south-western France, it may only be a matter of time before it finds its way across the channel.

The adults measure around 30 mm (1¼") in length. The legs are brown with orange ends and the head is black with an orange-yellow face.

The thorax is dark brown and the abdomen is mainly black but with a wide orange-yellow band at the end.



Where it is established in France it has become a serious predator of honey bees, killing off the workers and plundering the brood.

The National Bee Unit is very keen to prevent this hornet from getting a foothold in the UK. Fertilised queens over-

winter in cracks and crevices so there is a danger that one or more can come in via plants imported by a garden centre. They will start to emerge soon so it is important to keep a lookout for them.

Any sightings should be reported at once to the National Bee Unit. More details can be found by following the link <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=208>

February in the Apiary

On fine days you can already see bees flying out and starting to bring back pollen. There is not much out there for them at the moment but snowdrops are just starting and the catkins of hazel and willow are swelling up.

Some people have planted winter aconite which is now in bloom but this is a member of the buttercup family and I am not sure if the bees work it for pollen. If you have some in your garden and the bees are on it please let me know.

Although it is great to see, there is a downside to bees bringing in pollen this early. It means the queen has probably started to lay again so the colony could run out of food if stores are low.

If you are planning to change any of your brood comb this spring, now is the time to make sure you have enough frames and foundation available. In next month's newsletter I will go through the Bailey and the Shook Swarm, which are two methods of doing a complete comb change.

Even if you are not thinking about doing a full comb change, you should consider replacing at least one third of your brood frames each year.



Catkins of the goat willow (*Salix cinerea*) have orange pollen



Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) has mustard-coloured pollen



Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)



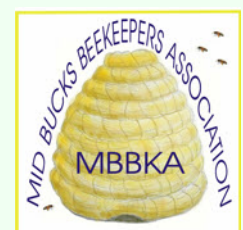
Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) has orange/brown pollen

Don't forget our next meeting on Wednesday 16th February

Frank Rickett

Chairman

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





BUCKS COUNTY

BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No. 297335

15th ANNUAL SEMINAR

Saturday 5th March 2011 - 10:00am to 4:00pm

Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover HP22 6HF

- 10:00** Meet for coffee and registration
- 10:30** Welcome by the County Chairman, Frank Rickett
- 10:40** **Learning to forage in the floral supermarket**
Dr. Nigel Raine – senior lecturer, University of London
- 11:50** **Can Pesticides and bees co-exist?**
Dominic Dyer – Chief Executive, Crop Protection Association
- 1:00** **Ploughman's lunch**
Time, also, to spend visiting the various exhibits and sales stands
- 2:30** **The raffle will be drawn. Proceeds will go to bee research**
- 2:40** **The decline of our insect pollinators.**
Stuart Roberts – School of Agriculture, University of Reading
- 3:50** Closing remarks by the County President, John Catton
- Cost:** £12 per person, to include refreshments and Ploughman's lunch

Please pay on the door, but **please book beforehand with....**

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