

## Where has winter gone?

This time last year we were knee-deep in snow but the weather is so mild at the moment that the clusters are starting to break up and many queens will undoubtedly be laying.

Last month I described oxalic acid treatment for controlling Varroa and Sean Stephenson ran a very successful demonstration at the Association Apiary on Saturday 7th January. If you plan to treat with oxalic acid this winter and have not already done so, you should do it within the next couple of weeks - certainly no later than the end of January.

As the bees get more active they will consume more of their winter stores so it is important to ensure that they do not run short.

You cannot feed ordinary sugar syrup at this time of year because the weather is too cold for the bees to concentrate it up and it will go mouldy in the comb. There are three main food sources you can give; these are:

1. **White bakers fondant.** This is a very convenient way of feeding. The fondant is easy to handle and keeps very well provided you wrap it up properly to avoid it drying out. Put between ½ and 1 kg onto a piece of baking parchment or greaseproof paper and place it on the cover board. It is supplied in 12.5 kg boxes and can be obtained from Paul Monument, tel: [01296 640842](tel:01296640842), email: [library@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:library@mbbka.org.uk). The cost is £15.00 per box; because of the nature of the material it is not possible to split boxes into smaller amounts.



2. **Candy.** You can make this yourself from granulated sugar. It helps if you have a jam-making thermometer. Take **2.5kg** of sugar in **500ml** of water with a teaspoonful of Cream of Tartar. Boil the mixture until the sugar is dissolved and simmer for 10 minutes. Stop when the temperature reaches 120°C. Take care not to burn the mixture. If you don't have a jam-making thermometer, place a drop of the boiling liquid onto a cold plate. When ready it will solidify immediately to a soft consistency. Allow it to cool but before it sets, pour into suitable containers: old margarine or ice-cream tubs will do, or metal trays lined with greaseproof paper. When set, invert and place over the feed hole with the candy exposed to the bees.

3. **Ambrosia Syrup.** This is already concentrated and can be fed at any time of year but be careful what type of feeder you use. A rapid feeder where the bees need to climb a tower is not suitable because the bees will be reluctant to move up during cold weather. You will need to use a contact feeder.



### Coming Events

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February**  
**Alice Dowswell**

**"Walter Rothschild: the Man, the Museum and the Menagerie"**

7:30 pm in the Bowls Club

Alice is a curator at the Natural History Museum in Tring

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February**  
**Beginner's Course Starts**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March**  
**"Beekeepers Question Time"**

7:30 pm in the Bowls Club

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April**  
**"Bees Abroad"**  
**(details to be announced)**

Next Meeting

**QUIZ**  
**NIGHT**  
**&**  
**SUPPER**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January**  
at 7:30pm in the Bowls Club

Bookings are now being taken for the **Quiz Night** on **18<sup>th</sup> January** and it promises to be a great evening.

You don't have to set up a team in advance. Come along and pair up with some others on the night.

We have made arrangements with the local fish and chip shop to provide either fish and chips or chicken and chips. We need to know numbers in advance so that we can order the food.

There is still time to register. Contact **Liz Tice** Tel: [01296 612618](tel:01296612618) email: [liztice@hotmail.com](mailto:liztice@hotmail.com) no later than 6pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January.

Come along and join in the fun!

# Mid Bucks Beekeepers Association January 2012 Newsletter



Ripe catkins shedding pollen can already be seen this year

## Treating frames and boxes with acetic acid

Fumigating used combs and boxes with acetic acid is quite easy to do and is very effective in killing nosema spores, wax moth eggs and larvae.

Use it both for super and brood frames. Acetic acid is particularly useful if you have drawn brood frames that you want to reuse next season.

Now is a good time to do it so that the frames are ready for the spring.

You will need a supply of 80% acetic acid, an old roof, some duct tape and a suitable **outdoor** location.

Cover all metal runners and castellated spacers with petroleum jelly. They will corrode if exposed to the acid fumes.

1. The stack should be built on an old pallet or on a concrete slab that is covered with a sheet of plastic. It must not go directly onto concrete because the acid will damage the surface.

**TAKE CARE** when handling the acid. **Always** wear stout gloves and eye protection and **always** handle it outdoors. **AVOID** breathing in the vapour.



2. As you build the stack, place a wad of kitchen roll soaked in about 10ml of 80% acetic acid on top of the frames in each box.
3. Finish off the stack with an old roof and seal the joints between each box with duct tape.
4. Leave for at least 2 weeks then take the stack apart, remove the wads of kitchen roll and let the boxes air outside for at least two weeks.



John Dadswell can obtain 80% acetic acid in 1 litre bottles which will be enough for about 100 boxes. The cost will be about £5.50 per bottle. The acid keeps indefinitely if tightly closed so will last a number of years. If you would like some, contact John on 01296 624091 or email [membership@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:membership@mbbka.org.uk)

## Subscriptions 2011/2012

Some people have still not yet renewed their membership.

If you need a renewal form, you can download one from the web site at [www.mbbka.org.uk/membership.html](http://www.mbbka.org.uk/membership.html) or contact John Dadswell on 01296 624091, email: [membership@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:membership@mbbka.org.uk).

According to our rules, we must remove from our membership list anyone who has not renewed by now. For beekeepers this could mean that you are no longer properly insured.

**If you have not already done so, please pay your subscription as soon as possible.**

## Diesel fumes - the latest cause of CCD?

It was reported in the December issue of "Beekeepers Quarterly" that researchers at Southampton University have suggested that nanoparticles emitted by diesel fumes could be affecting the bees' brains and damaging their navigation skills thereby making it difficult for them to find their way home.

This is not the first time that navigation problems caused by pollutants have been proposed as the cause of CCD so, who knows, there may be something in it.

The Southampton team have been given funding for the next three years to continue their research.

## Nothing changes

I was recently looking through some old newsletters and I found an entry from July 1974. The writer (not named) praised the classes given at the Hampden Hall apiary by Bob Neil who, at the time, was the County Bee Inspector.

*"The tips and information I picked up from Mr. Neil undoubtedly saved me from starving my bees during the horrid month of June".*

Apart from the personnel involved, nothing has changed!

***A Happy New Year to you all***

*Hope you can come to the quiz night on 18th January. There is an order form for food on the next page*

*Frank Rickett*

*Chairman*

*Tel: 01494 866516 Email: [chairman@mbbka.org.uk](mailto:chairman@mbbka.org.uk)*



# Quiz Night

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012

7:30 pm in the Bowls Club

For the Quiz Night we have made arrangements with the local fish and chip shop to provide either fish and chips or chicken and chips.

You don't have to order food if neither option is to your taste but we must place the orders with the shop earlier in the day. We need to have numbers by 6 pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January at the latest.

Please order for me:

\_\_\_\_\_ portions of Cod and Chips & £6.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ portions of Chicken and Chips & £6.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

To save us having to handle lots of small cheques, would you pay cash on the night but **PLEASE** let us know in advance if you cannot come and need to cancel your order as all food will have to be paid for.

You can put in your order by email or phone to:

Liz Tice

Tel: 01296 612618      email: [liztice@hotmail.com](mailto:liztice@hotmail.com)