

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter September 2014

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Last meeting - Barcombe 16th August

The weather was very kind to all the new bee-keepers who were there early to inspect the newly placed hives at Barcombe. Bees seemed very settled, but one was low in stores, being a swarm from June. Heather discussed the type of feeds to be used in winter and indicated she would feed this colony within the week. The inspection trays each revealed 3-5 varroa and everyone identified them, especially those seeing varroa for the first time. As the trays had been in for 5 days, danger levels to the bees were deemed within safe parameters, but later an Apiguard demo of treatment was shown, and trays of Apiguard sold.

Back in the barn, bee clearance with a rhombus was shown, and then volunteers came forward to uncap the super frames before they were spun off in the electric extractor. A sticky, but tasty, time was had by all.

Thanks to Connie and Candi for organising the refreshments, and to others for donations of scrummy cakes.

Special request – whoever brought the cake with crumbly topping to the meeting, please send Heather the recipe!



End of season BBQ at Heathers' - Saturday 14th September

Heather is hosting this social event but wishes to know how many plan to attend for catering purposes. Husbands, wives family and friends all welcome! Just let her know numbers please. Either call

01825 722066 or E: heathermcniven@btinternet.com, please copy and paste

1pm at Stonecroft, Lower Station Road, Newick, BN8 4HU

Evolutionary history of bees revealed by genomics

Home is Asia, and NOT Africa! This is News, If It Is Correct.

In a study published in Nature Genetics, researchers from Uppsala University present the first global analysis of genome variation in honeybees. The findings show a surprisingly high level of genetic diversity in honeybees, and indicate that the species most probably originates from Asia, and not from Africa as previously thought.

The honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) is of crucial importance for humanity. One third of our food is dependent on the pollination of fruits, nuts and vegetables by bees and other insects. Extensive losses of honeybee colonies in recent years are a major cause for concern. Honeybees face threats from disease, climate change, and management practices. To combat these threats it is important to understand the evolutionary history of honeybees and

how they are adapted to different environments across the world.

"We have used state-of-the-art high-throughput genomics to address these questions, and have identified high levels of genetic diversity in honeybees. In contrast to other domestic species, management of honeybees seems to have increased levels of genetic variation by mixing bees from different parts of the world. The findings may also indicate that high levels of inbreeding are not a major cause of global colony losses", says Matthew Webster, researcher at the department of Medical Biochemistry and Microbiology, Uppsala University.

Continued foot of P2

Amanda advises



It is beginning to feel quite autumnal now towards the end of August, with cool nights. I would like to know how my bees are but prefer not to disturb them while they have Apiguard on. However, I am watching the entrances and they seem to be busy, visiting water balsam and borage in my garden, and just recently a lot of dark orange pollen has been going in (ragwort?). I have been monitoring the mite drop and the largest colony at Grassroots dropped 2000 in the first two weeks of Apiguard treatment, which is rather high, whereas some smaller colonies which only had one box of brood and were easier to treat with icing sugar this summer, have only dropped a couple of hundred mites.

Although we should have made sure they had plenty of stores to last them while the treatment is on, it is a good idea to heft them or have a quick look during the treatment. I have a couple of small colonies/nucs which I had to feed mid-Apiguard, even though no honey was removed from them.

Except for one which was superseding so I delayed putting on Apiguard for a week while the virgin was mating, I shall inspect all the rest thoroughly when the treatment is finished and removed in the first week in September, this will probably be my last full inspection. What I will be looking for is firstly, is there a queen? Secondly, is there healthy brood? Sometimes the treatment puts the queen off lay and you may even have found brood had been thrown out by the bees on the insert. As long as they have a queen they will quickly recover when the treatment is removed. If no queen then at this time of year unless you have a spare queen in an Api-dea your only option is probably merging with another colony, providing they both look healthy.

The health of the colony should have been checked before treatment as it is too late now to do much about it, but it is worth making notes about the state of the comb, and earmark those colonies needing shook swarm or Bailey exchange in the spring. Also I move dark, tatty frames of comb with no brood to the edges for removal in the spring. If the queen excluders were not removed when the honey was taken off then be sure to remove them now.

Most importantly, at this inspection, check the stores they currently have, and don't forget that pollen stores are important too. A very full National brood frame can hold 2.5kg. They need between 13-25kg to survive the

winter depending upon the size of the colony. Deduct what they already have (by totting up the amount on each comb) from this figure and feed the balance as 2:1 (sugar:water) as soon as and as quickly as possible using a rapid feeder, before the weather becomes too cold to take it down and process it. Don't be tempted to over feed or they will store it in areas which should have brood in, and processing syrup is hard work and wears them out. I like to get most of my feeding finished by the end of September, but as I mentioned last month, I have left most of my colonies with a substantial amount of honey as recent research suggests this is better for them. If you have not already done so, reduce the entrance size to reduce robbing. It is best if you can start feeding in the evening and do all at the same time as they can get very excited and trigger robbing. Mouse guards can go on, probably after feeding if completed by end September but certainly before the weather gets cold, or use an entrance block with reduced height of 9mm (or panel pins at 9mm intervals) as the bees find it easier to get in without knocking off valuable pollen and also it is easier for them to remove the inevitable winter dead than through the holes in metal mouse guards which can easily become blocked by dead bees causing great distress to the colony. This year I am putting new entrances of 5.5mm height in my colonies as this will also keep the Asian hornet out. I did not notice many wasps around this summer but they are pestering my hives now and I have put wasp traps up.

In spare moments this month I shall go through all my supers, which are numbered so they go back on the same colony, and scrape the top and bottom edges of the boxes and remove the propolis etc from the runners. I shall also remove and recycle any frames which have had brood in or are clogged with pollen before the wax moth gets a hold. They can then either go in the deep freeze for a few days or be treated with acetic acid to kill nosema and wax moth so they will be all ready to use in spring.

From P1

Another unexpected result was that honeybees seem to be derived from an ancient lineage of cavity-nesting bees that arrived from Asia around 300,000 years ago and rapidly spread across Europe and Africa. This stands in contrast to previous research that suggests that honeybees originate from Africa.

"The evolutionary tree we constructed from genome sequences does not support an origin in Africa, this gives us new insight into how honeybees spread and became adapted to habitats across the world", says Matthew Webster.

Hidden in the patterns of genome variation are signals

that indicate large cyclical fluctuations in population size that mirror historical patterns of glaciation. This indicates that climate change has strongly impacted honeybee populations historically.

"Populations in Europe appear to have contracted during ice ages whereas African populations have expanded at those times, suggesting that environmental conditions there were more favourable", says Matthew Webster.

The researchers also identified specific mutations in genes important in adaptation to factors such as climate and pathogens, including those involved in morphology, behaviour and innate immunity.

'How they moved the hut' - no not from Ghent to Aix

but 'from Whitelands to Barcombe'

Some time ago it was decided that due to the uncertainty of continuity that the out apiary at Whitelands should be closed. At the time of reporting all but two colonies have been successfully transferred.

That just left the hut...



Barcombe before the rearrangement of the site



Out of the wood...



Steady as you go.



Left a bit, right a bit up a bit... down!



...Into the evening sunshine and on to the trailer

It took just two hours (sic). All in all a hearty thanks to Charles and his trailer and the helpers who turned up and lent their muscles to the task, not forgetting Hilary for welcome refreshments at the end.



swarm

Terry Tullets' unusual swarm...

Terry had a call from Charles and went to collect a swarm in Hove.

"The chap only discovered it when he went to pick some apples. I think it had been around for a while as they had made a fair bit of comb.

The bees were very calm and quite low on the apple tree, so not too difficult. Found the queen with ease, a first for me. Cut them off the tree with the comb. Housed them in a brood box still on the comb. Put some frames in with them. Will sort it all out when they are settled. Happy days." reports Terry.



Rottingdean village fair - 2nd August, Hilary Osman

The weather was kind to us, and the stall was buzzing with enquires on keeping bees, (the observation hive drawing in the crowds) and the virtual hive as a further learning tool, extraction of honey, and why so many different colours of honey and types of honey available. (chunk, cut comb, set and runny).

We sold over 200 jars, and all who took honey to sell sold out, and we were left with just 7 jars to bring home.

Some wax goods were sold too.

Generally a great day out.



Left:
Local MP Simon Kirby visits the stand

Sussex Beekeepers Conference - November 15th 2014

The convention will be held at :-

The Ashdown Room
Uckfield Civic Centre
Uckfield TN22 1AE

Attached is a pdf with all the details

Divisional Diary 2013/4

Outdoor meetings. Start times – Beginners at 1.30 and main meeting 2.30

Programme

Out Apiary meetings

April 12th Whitelands. Shook Swarms & Bailey Change, Start the Year Clean. Heather McNiven.

May 31st Barcombe Apiary. Bee Diseases, Amanda Millar. **Note start time 2.00pm**

June 21st, Philip Else.

July 13th Grass Roots Apiary, Managing supers and nectar flow, planning for winter

August 16th Barcombe, Super Removal, Extracting Explained. Heather McNiven

September 6th Stanmer Apiary, Candi Gould and Charles Keen. Varroa treatment and inspection of hives with Diane Steele (regional bee inspector).

September 14th Heather McNiven's home, Newick BBQ (see page1).

Other Events

November 15th SBKA Conference, Uckfield

The Brighton and Lewes Division of the SBKA cannot accept any responsibility for loss, injury or damage sustained by persons in consequence of their participation in activities arranged.

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Contributions to our newsletter

Contributions to the newsletter (max 900 words) can be sent preferably by email to the editor see Officer panel above for details
Photos etc. for the website should be emailed to our webmaster, see panel above.

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