

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter September 2015

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

Next meeting - Sunday September 6th Grassroots

Usual start time of 1.30pm beginners and 2.00pm general. Amanda will be leading the meeting. All about winter preparation. Don't forget your cup/mug and something to eat.

Meeting -Saturday 15th August-Out apiary, Barcombe

On a sunny day at Barcombe we started promptly at 1.30pm. New visitors were welcomed, and joined the group of first year bee keepers to go through hives. Initially brood was found in all stages and shown to all who hadn't bees yet, and general bee behaviour discussed. Then varroa was found on an inspection board, which Heather brought from home and everyone identified the mites amongst the general debris.

Super removal, and varroa treatment was demonstrated, although all hives at Barcombe were so low in varroa drop it was decided that they wouldn't need August treatment.

Finally, although the end of the busy swarm time, Heather again demonstrated swarm control by splitting a hive in two as there is still confusion among many members re this procedure. Hopefully this will reduce



the number of phone calls for swarm collections next year.

Connie excelled herself organising refreshments, during which questions and answers continued for another enjoyable hour. Nick was thanked for his generous hospitality, again.

Photo Connie Sturt

Last summer meeting - Sunday September 13th

Although we are meeting at Grassroots Apiary on Sept 6th the last Summer meeting is just a social time and all B&L members are invited to a BBQ at Heather's home in Newick. This is on the following Sunday, September 13th and is from 1pm. No hives opened, but plenty of time to talk 'bees' and ask

questions...and hear varying answers! Please email/ phone Heather to confirm attendance (to help catering numbers)

email heathermcniven@btinternet.com

phone 01825 722066

Seen in Croatia -David Beaven

We have just returned from a holiday in Croatia and on one of the islands there was a fruit market that had many possibly unwelcome customers. The bees were also happily chewing through the cling film that was wrapping water melons that had been cut in half lengthways.



Amanda advises

Well this month I hope to have a bit of a rest regarding the bees. Half of them still have Apiguard on until the second half of September during which time I do not disturb them except for noting the mites on the insert now and then. Of the other half, they are either swarms or nuclei with few mites because of a brood break which just need 2 or 3 icing sugar treatments, and 3 or 4 colonies which were in the process of requeening and I did not want Apiguard to disrupt the process. They had mostly had a brood break too and responded well to icing sugar treatments. I checked the mite levels by putting the insert in for a week and counting the mites and a double check with icing sugar test; I think the icing sugar test is much quicker and accurate, but not practical until the supers are off so I had the insert in while I was messing around with the supers. With small colonies it is much easier to just do the icing sugar test. The smaller ones also need feeding which is easy to do between dusting but would not be advisable during Apiguard treatment. When you replace the tray of Apiguard do heft for stores and have good look between frames. While the weather is good they seem to have held their own in the latter half of August regarding stores but we only need a few rainy days – as forecast for the next 3 days as I write this - and the large colonies can get through 10bs in a week.

I had thought my colonies were declining in population but some of them looked pleasingly full of bees still when I last opened them. Some still had some drone brood and I shall keep an eye on those colonies as it usually means they are superseding or unhappy with their queen.

Wasps are still a terrible problem this year and I find I have to replenish my wasp traps every couple of weeks, either because they are full of wasps if I got the bait right, or else they blow over or are ignored and need a different recipe. I have experimented with a spoon of plum jam in water, which seems reasonably successful, but also experimented with a bit of tonic or lemonade, and some beer lees from my homebrew, unfortunately I was too busy at the time to make a note of which was which for future reference! Reducing the entrance size is especially important with small colonies, to help them defend against wasps if not already done so. I have already heard of some colonies robbed out by wasps and dead.

As soon as your varroa treatment is finished assess their stores – which includes honey and pollen (see below regarding vitellogenin) - and top up with syrup to 45-50lbs for a brood and a half, and to about 20-25 lbs for a nucleus sized colony and give it to them as soon

as possible so they can process it while the weather is good. They may not winter well if it is still high moisture content and ferments over winter. Check the roofs are sound and no gaps. Get ready your insulation if you put it under the roof and the woodpecker netting.

It may seem strange to be talking of winter this early but I may do just one more full inspection when my Apiguard is removed to check how much stores they need and if they have a laying queen and that will be the last full one until next spring.

I store my supers licked dry by the bees with mouse- and wasp-proof solid plywood covers top and bottom. However it is almost impossible to moth proof them so I will start a once a month moth check to limit the damage as I have too many and no room in my deep freeze to kill the larvae. My bee suit needs repairs and my smoker needs a good de-coke before putting away so possibly not the hoped for rest after all!

There are some nice short films on <http://beekeep.info/ted-talks-about-honey-bees/> I particularly like the one on the first 21 days of a bee's life.

There has been some interesting research released in August about how developing bees can obtain a level of immunity, because insects do not have antibodies like us. It appears that if the queen is exposed to some diseases before producing eggs, then some immune priming molecules bind to the egg yolk protein Vitellogenin which are passed over when she lays an egg. This gives the larva a head start in defence against diseases it will probably come into contact with. It is already known that bees with higher levels of vitellogenin survive the winter better, it also acts as an antioxidant prolonging the life of queen and workers and as a hormone and a food store. In order to build high levels of vitellogenin bees need to have access to plenty of good quality varied pollen. The number of varroa mites on the bees in August and September negatively impact the vitellogenin levels in bees and therefore their ability to overwinter, which is why it is so important to reduce the varroa levels as soon as the honey is removed and preferably in the beginning of August so fat healthy winter bees can develop.



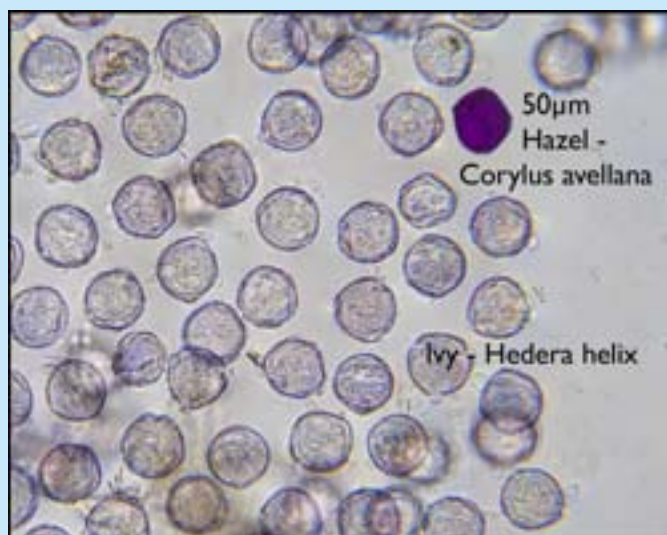
Microscopy workshop - Sunday 28th June, Bob Curtis

How do you spot Acarine? Nosema, is it really there? Is it really possible to dissect a bee? What pollen are my bees collecting? Well, these were a few of the questions we tried to investigate at the meeting. We had a whole range of microscopes from the very basic, hold in the hand field microscope, Binocular dissecting microscopes, and monocular compound microscopes.

We started the session by pulling apart bees and crushing them in an effort to spot Nosema spores, until Amanda introduced us to a much easier 'field' solution. The "Quick Squash" Method from Randy Oliver's Beekeeping Website (<http://scientificbeekeeping.com/sick-bees-part-16-the-quick-squash-method/>) is worth a look. Amanda then introduced us to a quick way to get an indication of Nosema; if, when you pull out the sting and intestine, they are swollen and pale in colour then this is an indication of Nosema.

Detection of the Acarine mite proved a bit of a challenge. The removal of various parts of bee to be able to see the trachea proved to be tricky, but with limited success, especially as it is not the best time of year to find the mite.

Gerald brought a wonderful selection of pollen slides



and we prepared a couple of them from pollen collected by the bees. Pollen sizes can be assessed by the use of hazel pollen as a size indicator at around 50µm (millionths of a metre). With a little bit of photo-shopping we managed to superimpose hazel pollen on an Ivy pollen slide.

Peacehaven Big Park Project - Proposed Apiary

A divisional Apiary in the new Big Park at Piddinghoe Avenue, Peacehaven becomes one step closer. We now have approval to use a newly fenced area of the new park for hives. It looks as if we can accommodate about 6 – 8 hives on the site, there is good access for moving full supers, etc. and the gate will be locked. Additionally, vehicle access is through a security barrier with CCTV. So, as from the autumn we are hoping to have some spaces available for members' use. Unlike our other divisional apiaries the idea is that most of the hives will belong to members.

The area has plenty of forage in the near vicinity from gardens, wild flower plantings in the park and field crops (the farmer had beans last year in the adjacent field and rape is popular within flying distance. Later this year they will be planting an orchard with several hundred trees next to the apiary.

If you are interested email Bob Curtis or Sue Taylor. Contact details in Officers details back page



Rottingdean fair - 1st August, Hilary Osman

The cars were packed with honey, orange marmalade with honey, vanilla and honey fudge, candles, wax blocks etc as we set off to Rottingdean. We found our stall (the gazebo) which Bob and Pat had kindly set up the previous night. Our willing helpers were Norman, Peter, Pat, Ken and I. We set the table up, and waited for the public to arrive. It wasn't long before we were

informing the crowds of the joy these insects give us. The observation hive which Heather lent for the day drew in the crowds and I have to say thank you to Ken for spending the day teaching and showing all the delights of this hive. Both young and old asked him questions all day and he happily answered. I think my patience would have flagged, but no, not Ken's.



Divisional Diary 2015

Outdoor meetings This year we will be holding meetings on Saturdays and Sundays. Unless otherwise stated a 1.30 start with beginners in mind will be followed by a general meeting at 2pm. All meetings advertised will be weather permitting.

Programme

Out apiary meetings

April 19th–Stanmer 1.30 Beginners 2pm General

May 23 – Barcombe Swarm control

June 14 Grassroots– managing the honey flow and supering, swarm aftercare

June 28 Microscopy workshop – at Bob Curtis's

July 12 Stanmer

August 15 Barcombe

September 6 Grassroots – Winter preparation

September 13 BBQ at Heather McNiven's

Dates for your diary

October 29-31 National Honey Show, St Georges College, Weybridge

November 28 SBKA Annual convention

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.

Officers of the Division

President

Lionel Reuben

Chairman

Bob Curtis

Curtis Photography, Woodside, Falmer Rd, Brighton BN2

6LA T: 01273 303311 E: poshpix@me.com

Vice-Chairman/Treasurer/Membership Secretary

Pat Clowser, 5 Wivelsfield Road, Saltdean, BN2 8FP

T: 01273 700404 E: Patricia_clowser@hotmail.com

Secretary

Hilary Osman, Holly Tree Cottage, Norlington Lane,

Ringmer, BN8 5SH T: 01273 813045

E: secretary@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Meetings Secretary

Vacant

Swarm coordination

Sue Taylor T: 07813 557430 E: sue.geoff.t@hotmail.co.uk

Webmaster

Gerald Legg, E: gerald@chelifer.com

Newsletter editor

Lionel Reuben, Whincroft, Station Rd, Nth Chailey, BN8

4HG T: 01825 723453; E: lionel.r@talktalk.net

Librarian

Vicky Dunster (non-committee)

Out-Apiary Managers

Pat Clowser, "Stanmer"

Amanda Millar, "Burgess Hill"

Heather McNiven "Knowlands Farm"

County Representatives

Pat Clowser, Bob Curtis

Education coordinator

Heather McNiven

National Honey Show Representative

Vacant

Committee Members

Sue Taylor, Gerald Legg, Heather McNiven, Mary King

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.

Regional Bee Inspector:

Julian Parker, T: 07775 119469

E: julian.parker@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector East of A275: David Rudland

T: 01883 622788 Mob: 07775 119448

E: david.rudland@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Other areas: Diane Steele, T: 01903 745667

Mob: 07775 119452 E: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk