

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter February 2015

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

Next meeting - Paul de Zylva, Feb 24th, note this is a Tuesday

Paul de Zylva is the senior campaigner for Nature and Eco-system security for Friends of the Earth.

He also chairs Wildlife and Countryside Link, the umbrella body of the country's leading 35 environment, nature, access and animal welfare organisations.

Paul became a community 'environmentalist' in Croydon whilst working in financial services, before

moving into the voluntary sector. Paul believes he has expertise in spotting 'greenwash' and has led campaigns on Heathrow Terminal 5 and aviation; the 'Hello Mayor' campaign during the first GLA elections; and saving London's top wildlife haven at Rainham Marsh from repeat development threats.

This promises to be a lively evening.

AGM - January 21st

We had an unusually small number of committee members at meeting due to extenuating circumstances. This did not stop a successful meeting and the business as per the agenda proceeded speedily.

The out apiary reports highlighted the fact that we have left Whitelands after many years and have decided not to continue with Plumton as access there is becoming more difficult.

John Claydon gave an amusing swarm report for his short period in office last year – he had to stand down due to ill health – we are pleased to report that he is now restored to good health.

Committee was re-elected en bloc with some shifting of duties (see Officers panel on back page for details).

A proposal from the floor to make Lyn Hawkins an Honorary Life Member was enthusiastically endorsed.

The meeting concluded at 8pm and was followed by our speaker.



Heather reporting on her activities with swarms

Congratulations Lyn

As noted in the AGM report above, our dear and respected Lyn Hawkins was made an honorary life member. Lyn has been an active participant in the activities of our division for many a year. She recently lost her husband and soulmate (and our division president). We do hope Lyn that you will feel able to come to some of our out apiary meetings this season to be with and among your many friends.

Swarm Swarm Swarm

If you are looking to have a swarm this year you need to be on the swarm list. All you have to do is contact Sue Taylor and let her know. Email sue.geoff.t@hotmail.co.uk copy and paste please.

Last meeting Nikki Gammans - January 21st

Nikki Gammans gave an excellent, well received, informative lecture on "Bumble Bees and Pollination". Members who heard a previous lecture by Dave Goulson will be familiar with the work of the Bumble Bee Trust. Nikki heads up this organisation and gave us plenty of fascinating facts and differences between the bumble and honey bees. She also gave some details of the 200 odd species which is divided into solitary and what might be termed colony forming bees. Unlike *apis mellifera*, *bombus sp* do not overwinter like our honey bees. Only the Qs emerge after dormancy in the new year to continue the life cycle. Members unfortunate enough not to be present missed a delightful presentation.



Nikki Gammans



Nikki's sales table

Uber-tidy bees save the day - Gerald Legg

NewScientist 17 January 2015-01-20

For some, cleanliness is next to godliness. For honeybees, it's a way of saving the hive from disaster. The varroa mite sucks the blood of worker bees' pupae, reducing their immunity to disease, transmitting viruses and sometimes causing the entire hive to collapse.

Bees have one trick up their sleeve: being tidy. Hygienic worker bees find and dispose of infected pupae. To study this behaviour, Francis Ratnieks of the university of Sussex in Brighton, UK, and colleagues placed a section of honeycomb that had been frozen to

kill the pupae inside 42 honeybee colonies.

Within a day, most had removed around half of the dead pupae, but some had managed to remove more than 95 per cent. These super-hygienic colonies also had less than half the Varroa mite levels of the less hygienic colonies, and were also less likely to show shrivelled wings – a sign of a virus infection.

"This finding could be very useful for beekeepers as it would reduce the harmful effects of varroa in a natural way," says Ratnieks, "You can breed for this behaviour by screening colonies and breeding the most hygienic."

Prof Ratnieks has been saying this for some time – interesting it's now made it to this august publication. *Ed*

Bees go back to church - Anne Miles-Eve

From the Winter 2014 issue of the magazine of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

Bees have returned to a specially built 'secret' hive within a pinnacle at Rosslyn Chapel thanks to repairs recently completed by masons at the 15th century Midlothian building made famous by the Da Vinci Code.

The building is covered in figures & symbols which have intrigued people for centuries. In 2010 masons found an ancient hive deliberately built into the stone by their predecessors. It was found when an unstable rooftop pinnacle was dismantled. The bees entered their purpose-built home by a single hole in a flower crafted 600 years ago by the chapel's master masons.

Malcolm Mitchell, of Page architects, explained: "The hive was a hollow about the size of a gas cylinder, but it had been abandoned. It was immediately obvious that master masons had built it in, whether under direction or not. It's extraordinary. These hives were never intended to be a source of honey. They were there purely to protect the bees from our inclement weather."

The pinnacle hive was even coated inside to protect

the masonry from the bees' activity. The bees probably abandoned the hive when a canopy was placed over the chapel in earlier renovation works.

The pinnacles were reinstated this year by Nicholas Boyes Stone Conservation with masons taking care to retain the secret hive space. In October SPAB member Nic Boyes was delighted to report on behalf of his team that the Rosslyn bees have come 'home' again.



Amanda advises

As spring bee inspections could start at the beginning of March if the weather is good, February is the last chance to get things ready, clean and repaired. Jobs such as going through the supers one last time, to check for wax moth and scraping any propolis and dead bees off the edges and runners and removing burr comb from the top bars should be completed. It will lead to easier working in the spring and cause less vibration which might annoy the bees. I pin numbers on my supers so they are put back on the hive they came off. It is a good idea to treat them with acetic acid for a week if you think you might have had viruses or nosema, or plan to put them on a different colony. Do be sure to ventilate thoroughly for at least a couple of weeks before giving to the bees. Another task is to make sure you always have, from spring onwards, a super ready made up and also a brood box ready, for any swarm, swarm control, or nectar flow. I would make up any frames I might need in February (by then I should have finished all my cleaning and maintenance) but only adding the foundation in February or March so the wax is fresh. Wrap them in a dustbin bag to keep in the aroma, bees prefer that to old dry wax.

And now for something completely different. Having got all the bee stuff prepared it is time to look to our own preparation and I am particularly thinking about lady beekeepers here. I have long suffered with a troublesome back which is easily strained with heavy

lifting. As I tend to be a bit sedentary in winter my muscles become weak; I like to take up some simple exercises to strengthen my lower back in early Spring to be ready for the strains of bee inspections. Leg raising, touch-your-toes, curls, press-ups

are fine assuming you have no physical restrictions, and my osteopath put me on to the Tracy Anderson moves, lots of which are available on U Tube. They are not designed to give big muscles but more to trim down thighs and upper arms. I go for the ones on abdominals, thighs, butt and arms to help with lifting supers etc. The background noise (music?) is awful but once you get to know the moves you can turn the sound off. I managed - with great difficulty - to get my favourites on to memory stick so can now play them through the TV, but an iPad or laptop would be good too. Start gently and work up.

I have updated the handout for the Bee health workshop I did in 2013 as I gave it to the Eastbourne Division and the Hastings and Rother Division in January. It can be found on the Information page of our B&L website if you wish to remind yourself. Also instructions for icing sugar dusting are there now.



Book and website reviews - Amanda Millar

A couple of snippets of interest for you. I subscribe to the Apis Newsletter. It is an American email newsletter and sometimes it draws attention to interesting items of news or research applicable to this side of the Pond. Today I was reminded of the Honey Bee Suite. This is an American site with some interesting items. It is a blog so read with caution but most of the main articles (the few I have read so far) seem sensible enough, unlike the amusingly rubbish comments which seem to be written mainly by inexperienced American beekeepers. I was forced to write a comment correcting some of their misconceptions today although I do not normally respond to blogs.

However check out the item <http://www.honeybeesuite.com/csi-colony-postmortem/> concerning a colony which has recently died. The photos are interesting, I hope you do not have a colony looking

like this. Spot all the errors in the comments; I am not surprised bees in the US are in trouble. (No, that is rude of me, there are some excellent beekeepers such as the Scientific Beekeeping website author, Randy Oliver and many other academics.) I will be interested to see what the Editor's final conclusion is. Also the editor refers to an item on Pollen - I always prefer to go to the source and not second hand comments, the source is at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in868> The benefits of pollen to honey bees. There are other items to be found on the University of Florida IFAS Extension on beekeeping.

I find it somewhat sinister/intrusive/big-daddy-is-watching-you when I receive adverts about things I have been Googling or searching. However, sometimes these Google and Amazon spies come up trumps and I was notified just before Christmas of a book on scanning electron micrographs of bees. I cannot imagine why it thought I was interested in bee books...

For Sale

One All-In-One Full Bee Suit BB501
Colour lilac good condition, hardly used. Medium size
£50.00

Extraction equipment

1 Plastic, manual 2 frame extractor £60.00
1 Double nylon strainer £5.00

2 Honey buckets, large
2 Honey buckets, small

£1.00 each
£0.50 each

Fran Rawlinson
fran.rawlinson@mac.com

A moving story - Terry Tullett

Terry writes:-



So having had the bees inspected by the Animal & Plant Health Agency and having the correct paperwork all that was necessary to prepare the bees for their journey to France was to block them in and fit mesh travel screens. This was done the day before in semi-darkness. Next morning whilst loading the hives I realized one of the mesh screens was on upside down, meaning a few bees had escaped. I discovered this after I had been stung about 6 times and Lorraine about 9 times. A quick bit of wood work and the bees were secure and we set off for the ferry. Fortunately Lorraine reacts less to stings than I do, so as I was about to pass out she drove. We arrived late for the ferry, but due to the storms in the channel the ferry was also late. We checked the bees at

the port and gave them a spray with water. The journey to our house was fairly uneventful except for the odd bee arriving on my shoulder, a tad unnerving as I wasn't sure my body could take another sting and I was now driving. We arrived just as darkness fell and put the hives on stands we had set up in advance. The next morning I removed the mesh screens surrounded by some very angry bees. Since then we have seen bees making orientation flights and today a few were flying off, so hopefully all is well.

I have attached a couple of pics, one of the transport and one of the bees in situ.
Salut



I'm sure we all wish Terry well in his new locale. Ed



Honey recipe hints - Amanda Millar

I enjoy making bread and always use a teaspoon of honey in a little water to get the dried yeast going. If it is a sweet bread I put a dessert spoon of honey into the mix too. I discovered one of the nicest of breads this winter (again from the Waitrose Magazine of some years back). It is called Fig and Goat's Cheese Fougasse (flat bread to you and me)

250g strong bread flour, I use a mixture of white and malted grain, or wholewheat and white.
½ tsp yeast, allowed to froth with some water and honey
1 tablesp olive oil
150ml warm water
1/5 tsp dried herbe de provence
50g soft dried figs chopped
50g mature hard goat's cheese chopped

Mix flour, oil, yeast and water and knead until smooth and elastic. Put in lightly oiled bowl, cover with clingfilm and allow to double in warm place – about an hour.

Knead in the remaining ingredients, stretch out on a tray lined with parchment, to about 1.5-2cm thick oval. Make a few slashes and pull out to open up the holes. Cover with oiled cling film, rise for another hour, brush with a little oil and scatter some more herbs and cook in preheated oven to 200 deg C, for 15mins, remove from parchment and put direct on the rack in the oven for further 5 mins to crisp underneath. It is lovely with salad or cheese or soup or just nibbling, does not get a chance to last long.

Divisional Diary 2014/5

Indoor meetings 7.15 for 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday, (October to March) at St. Thomas's church hall, Lewes unless otherwise stated. Members are invited to arrive early and assist in putting out chairs. Admittance £1 which will include tea/coffee, cake/biscuits Non-members are welcome.

Programme

Indoor meetings

October 15th – Bee behaviour and colony loss – Norman Carrick

November 19th – Practical beekeeping advice – Tom Moore

December 17th – A quiz evening with Amanda Millar - a change from our schedule

January 21st – AGM – Bumblebees and pollination – Dr Nikki Gammans

February 24th (*NB Tuesday*) – Can we be the generation to save Britain's bees?
Paul de Zylva

March 18th – Is Natural always Nice?– Pam Hunter

Other Events

November 15th SBKA Conference, Uckfield

Dec 20th Hastings and Rother talk, see P3 this newsletter.

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: bob@bobcurtisphoto.co.uk

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 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

Seasonal Bee Inspector other areas: Diane Steele, T: 01903 745667 Mob: 07775 119452 E: diane.steele@fera.gsi.gov.uk