

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter May 2015

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

Next meeting - May 23rd-Out apiary, Barcombe

This meeting will concentrate on swarm control. Usual start time of 1.30pm beginners and 2.00pm general. Heather McNiven will be leading the meeting. Don't forget your cup/mug and something to eat.

Last meeting - April 19th Out apiary, Stanmer

The weather was warm but very windy. Fortunately Stanmer is well protected by trees so the meeting was able to go ahead as planned. Fifteen beginners turned out for this early meeting held for the first time in recent history on a Sunday. The area in which the apiary is located is not open to the public. Hives were opened and many of the attendees had their first experience of seeing and handling bees – always an experience never to be forgotten.

The newly purchased shed sits in the shade of a nearby tree and will be a great improvement for the site. Many thanks to Pat Clowser and husband for erecting the shed and continuing work.

Many thanks also to Heather for sharing her knowledge and experience and to Hilary for supervising the tea department.



Festival of Bees - Saturday 16th May, Heathfield

The festival is on us once again. The advertising flyer is sent with the newsletter.

Swarm Swarm Swarm

If you are looking to have a swarm this year you need to be on the swarm list. Should you wish to learn about or help with swarm collecting. Contact Sue Taylor and let her know about your interest.

Email sue.geoff.t@hotmail.co.uk.

Don't forget to have a suitable place and a hive ready for the swarm should you join the list! Ed

Amanda advises

May is a very busy month in the beekeeping season; colonies will need supers adding; swarm preparations will be underway and towards the end of the month there may even be some spring crop to take off, especially if you have any rape nearby. Be ready to extract any oil seed rape honey as soon as the flowers fade before it sets. On top of that we should be selecting our best colonies and doing a bit of queen rearing. We have been lucky with the weather so far in April, the bees are busy, bringing lots of varied pollen, the colonies are expanding rapidly in the warmth and the fruit and hedgerow trees seem to have plenty of blossom this year. When I open my hives there is a lovely warm aroma. But who knows what is round the corner; last week the papers were predicting a three month heatwave but this week they are talking about an arctic blast into May. The Met Office says "there are no strong signals as to weather type". It does make it difficult to plan more for than a few days ahead.

So as I write there is a steady income of food for them and the requirement for feeding almost nil, it would be a good idea to remove any super frames with sealed winter stores, which is probably a mix of syrup and honey and may be granulated, before you add supers. We do not want this to contaminate the new crop of honey. Label which colony they came off and store in a cool place, in a plastic tray and with a board on top to prevent mice and bees accessing it. This can be given back to them in the autumn.

Give them supers in advance of their needs, if they feel congested it will only cause problems, congestion in the brood area is one of the factors promoting swarming. If they don't have enough storage space they will put

nectar in the brood area resulting in the queen having nowhere to lay. My bees seem to make large colonies and I routinely give them a brood and a super to lay in, sometimes they ask for even more. They tend not to use pollen over six months old so if

you see a frame clogged with old pollen (dark and shiny) then you could remove it and put a clean drawn frame of foundation in its place. A clogged pollen frame can act as a barrier to the queen laying.

On the subject of pollen, we all know how important it is for feeding the brood. Research published last month confirms this and indicates extensive adverse effects on developing bees if they are 'pollen stressed'. It seems that pollen stressed larvae develop into lighter adults, which do not live as long, may not go out foraging and if they do are more likely to die after their first foraging trip. They do not do as many dances (which is not surprising from the previous observation!). Those which do dance convey less precise information. It appears these disadvantages would have an impact on the next generation too. It is most likely that stressed larvae and adults are more vulnerable to pests, pesticides and diseases. Multiple stressors probably act synergistically to the detriment of the whole colony.

So how about planting something useful as a pollen source, and persuade your neighbours too.



'Bee scandal' - Gerald Legg

New Scientist 4 April 2015, p6

Has the UK government been stung? We still don't know if neonicotinoid pesticides kill bumblebees, but the latest research is alarming.

One of the UK's top bee researchers claimed last week that a study quoted two years ago by UK ministers to justify opposing a European union ban on neonicotinoids in fact shows that the pesticides can harm the insects.

The study, by Helen Thompson of the government's food and Environment Research Agency, found "no clear consistent relationships" between pesticide residues and measures of the health of bee colonies.

But Dave Goulson of the University of Sussex in Brighton has reanalysed the data and says the results "strongly suggest that wild bumblebee colonies in farmland can be expected to be adversely affected by exposure to neonicotinoids."

Bees are declining rapidly in the UK and elsewhere. Much attention has focused on neonicotinoids, which

are widely applied as insecticides to arable crops visited by bees. The EU temporarily banned the pesticides in 2013 after several studies demonstrated the damage caused to bumblebees fed with pesticide-laden pollen. But the Thompson study – not peer reviewed – was the first to look at bees in the wild. The UK environment minister declared, "We did not see ground for a ban based on our field trial data."

Goulson now says the data "quite clearly showed a negative relationship between pesticide levels and colony success. The study found 50 per cent fewer new queens in the hives near the pesticide-soaked fields.

"This is a scandal," says Matt Shardlow of the charity Buglife. "The scientific process appears to have been deliberately manipulated to agree with the environment secretary's views.

GL...So what about our honey bees?

This was reported in the general press but weight is added by the appearance in New Scientist.

Hot off the press <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/22/bees-may-become-addicted-to-nicotine-like-pesticides-study-finds> Ed

Microscopy workshop

A microscopy workshop will be held on Sunday 23 June at Bob Curtis's. The number of places are limited. If you wish to attend please contact Bob for more information.

Bob's contact details are given in the officers panel on the back page q.v.

Education - Heather McNiven

Amanda and I held a Tuition day for 13 people who were stepping into the great new world of Bee Keeping. Starting with 'this is a hive' and all parts thereof, we ended with disease and then flowers to grow. The full spectrum really. All looked into hives.. and complimentary email feed back was most encouraging. Mostly new members for B&L. We just need some

more experienced members to step forward as mentors to give all these new people confidence to progress practically.

I will soon be gathering all the people who want to do their Basic Assessment, to do a couple of pre exam rehearsals. Then they will be fully armed to confidently get their first qualification.

A Bee Catastrophe

Next time you have to shift bees from site to site be mindful of the cosequences of careless driving. See this video, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-32356471>

More photos from Stanmer meet



I had considered a caption competition but thought better of it! Ed



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

June 28 Microscopy workshop – Bob Curtis’s

July 12 Stanmer

August 15 Barcombe

September 6 Grassroots – Winter preparation

September 13 BBQ at Heather Mc Niven’s

Dates for your diary

May 16 Heathfield Bee Market

June 11-13 South of England Show

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

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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Pat Clowser, Bob Curtis

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Heather McNiven

National Honey Show Representative

Vacant

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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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