

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter August 2016

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

Next meetings - Out apiary, August 7th, Peacehaven August 21st, Grassroots

The Peacehaven meeting, August 7th will be the first for our new apiary. Visit the site and learn all about setting up a new apiary. Attached to the mailing a word doc for finding the Peacehaven site.

Grassroots on the 21st will be dealing with seasonal inspection including varroa assessment and treatment, using icing sugar dusting and Apiguard, assessing colony disease and food stores.

As usual 1.30 for beginners, both meets.

Meeting - Stanmer, July 2nd - Ian White

The weather was reasonably kind for the first visit to the Stanmer Apiary at the beginning of July. The theme for the day was going to be 'checking for disease'. In the end it turned out it was a case of looking to see if the hives were queen-right and whether there were adequate stores. The first hive inspected, which had the queen removed a couple of weeks previously, had not cast any queen cells and was very low on stores even though it had two supers when split. The second was the remains of a swarm I had collected in late May. This also was queenless and needed feeding. The third was queen-right (hooray!) but needed feeding and the fourth, a small nuc, was in the same position as the first two hives. So in the end the urgent business of the day was to ensure the colonies were fed and plan to introduce frames of brood from the Q right colony



A live Wax Moth larvae frozen for 24 hours but survived.

into the queenless colonies on the next visit.

Following on from the inspections, there followed a lively question and answer session relating to the management of bees and the equipment used. Although there are a number of different hives at Stanmer, all of the divisions' hives are wooden BS Nationals. There was discussion about types of 'clearer boards' or 'bee escapes'; both terms seem to be used interchangeably. The picture shows a variation of a Canadian or Quebec triangular clearer board, in this case according to the David Cushman web site <http://dave-cushman.net/bee/newhome.html> this is a Double Quebec Triangular Bee Escape. If you can't sleep one night there are another 22 different types of bee escape to choose from.

Librarian wanted

Our division is in need of a new Librarian. We would like to thank Vicky and Dusty for their many years in carrying out the role, but they have decided not to continue due to other commitments.

What is involved:

1. Bring the Library books to the winter meetings.
2. To look after the books, which are in plastic boxes and quite easily transported.
3. Keep a check of who has borrowed what and remind

- those who forget to bring them back.
4. Be a member of the committee if they wish, but it is not essential.

If you are interested please contact Hilary Osman (contact details on back page).

Amanda advises

At last the honey flow seems to be happening, or rather the weather is enabling the bees to make use of the flowers. Actually conditions could be quite good at the end of July; after plenty of rain the plants are big and strong and now some warmth should get the nectar flowing and concentrated. It may be that they will make up slightly after the delay of several weeks. The big question now is should I take all my supers off in first week in August as I normally do to get the Apiguard on or shall I try to get more honey by leaving it until the following week. I think I shall see what the temperature is, as I cannot put Apiguard on while the temperature risks reaching 24°C or they will be very miserable and



may be driven out of the hives, so I might as well leave the supers on until more suitable weather. The winter bees which will survive until next year need to be reared in a clean, disease free environment so we need to monitor and treat for varroa. As soon as the supers are off, I will dust once with icing sugar to monitor the levels of varroa so I can judge if any colonies are better at keeping varroa

down than others. This result, in combination with other factors such as swarming frequency, behaviour and honey crop, will give me an idea which colonies I will breed from next year. Other items on my 'to do' list include: entrance blocks back in, ensuring the colonies have space for the bees when I take my supers off, and putting more wasp traps up.

There are still swarms around, I collected a superb prime swarm on 20th July which is now filling a brood box, so will still have to be vigilant. Actually, I confess it was mine. Being so busy with 40 baby bats to look after I missed doing an inspection for 8 or 9 days and a few hours before I managed to do them all, out they came! With a clipped queen too, bigger surprise, they managed to get to the lower branches of a plum tree 4m away, and it was the swarm half of an artificial swarm I did the previous month, still they did leave a full super of honey behind.



Bit swarmy though, I am thinking.

I am seriously thinking about winter numbers

now, merging some small colonies and Apidea and I have a couple which are bad tempered which need requeening, but I will probably do that after the Apiguard treatment. The colonies will be smaller and at less at risk from robbing, or grumpy



from end of flow etc so the new queens are more likely to be accepted. I still have a few Apidea with virgins recently given which I hope will mate in August. I shall also do the stores check and any necessary feeding in September after the Apiguard is finished.

In my last notes I mentioned I had killed a colony with Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus (CBPV) in June probably because of the confinement due to bad weather. At the beginning of July I spotted another with it; my largest colony, good tempered, low swarming and with 6 supers on. I felt miserable about it, but decided to leave culling for a bit, or at least until I could get some of the supers finished. There were dead drone outside in a heap and I had seen them crawling up the side and trembling. I am delighted to say shortly after the weather improved dramatically and within a week there were no more trembling or dead outside and they look normal inside apart from a 10-20% reduction in adult population but as she is a prolific queen with masses of brood, even that is looking less obvious now. Phew! See photos

Finally, I videoed a case of washboarding on the front of a nuc in July. Nobody seems to know what the purpose of this behaviour but it is not thought to be particularly worrying; they only did it for one day.

It may be a while before we discover what effect leaving Europe will have for beekeeping but I can already think of a few, mostly potentially disastrous. Firstly, it was the EU which banned the neonicotinoids. The U.K. was initially reluctant to endorse it until it had petitions from the public. We will not have the EU behind us when farmers next apply for the ban to be lifted. Also it is EU money which helps the agri-environment schemes and funds some research, making farmland etc more environmentally friendly (think forage for bees). The government and opposition seem both to have put the environment, climate change etc. at the bottom of their priorities. The only possible benefit I can see is that it may be more difficult to import packages and queens from the EU, and hopefully will reduce the number of these foreign bees coming in messing up our local breeding programmes and bringing yet more strains of viruses etc. Also those beekeepers wanting to use dangerous non-uk-registered miticides may not be able to import them under the EU cascade system.

Recent research suggests yet another new way in which neonics adversely affect our bees. Brood development was found to be severely compromised because the neonics caused a reduction of

acetylcholine, an essential component in the brood jelly, by damaging the secretory cells in the brood food gland.

I also came across a new website: www.treatmentfreebeekeepers.co.uk They are not 'natural' beekeepers, but those encouraging selection for bees resistant to varroa and diseases, but on a small hobby beekeeper scale. They have some interesting articles such as on Ron Hoskins' resistant bees and how to cope emotionally with the loss of a colony, etc. I wish you good foraging!

Wash boarding is when all the bees point the same way, separate from each other, usually pointing down with heads down and move rhythmically back and forward, possibly with their heads or at least their mouthparts touching the hive. They are usually seen above the entrance. There are several YouTube videos on the website to see more of this strange behaviour.



This is not to be confused with bearding which is, for example, a response to hot conditions when bees move out to allow better ventilation in the hive, or

when they are gathering on the alighting board having swarmed and then returned. In this case the bees are clustered several deep, on top of each other, clinging to each other and not moving much, they often hang below the entrance to the hive then.

Meeting @ Bob Curtis's - 17th July

On a very warm day Bob welcomed members to his home apiary in Woodingdean. The declared mission for the meeting was to see and experience many types of hive. This was faithfully carried out. There are two significantly different hives the first being the WBC (named after William Broughton Carr, the inventor) and the polystyrene variety. Most will know the WBC as that typically used to illustrate honey labels etc. All the other

hives were of wooden construction. These included the standard National and the Langstroth.

Bob has several poly nucs (Maismore) one of which was exhibiting signs of overcrowding. This was soon remedied by placing two poly ekes thus making a super.

The lesson for the day was make sure you have sufficient surplus equipment to hand so that if required it can quickly be employed.



Too darned hot. Bees cooling of outside the hive.

Brighton and Lewes archive documents - Hilary Osman



With a job title, there can be storage problems! This I found out when taking over as B+L Hon. Secretary. I was given several boxes of old papers... many old sign-in books from past meetings, and old magazines. After a couple of years of gathering dust I was informed that they had to go. Where to? was my response. Anyway to cut a long story short The Keep at Brighton

has come up trumps. We have been able to store these papers there for free, and add to them yearly if required.

Well if you are like me, I didn't know about The Keep... It is a building nearby Stanmer Park that has archive documents on the lives of individuals, places and events from across the county and beyond. They include written records, maps and plans, prints and drawings, photographs and films, oral histories and digital and electronic recordings.

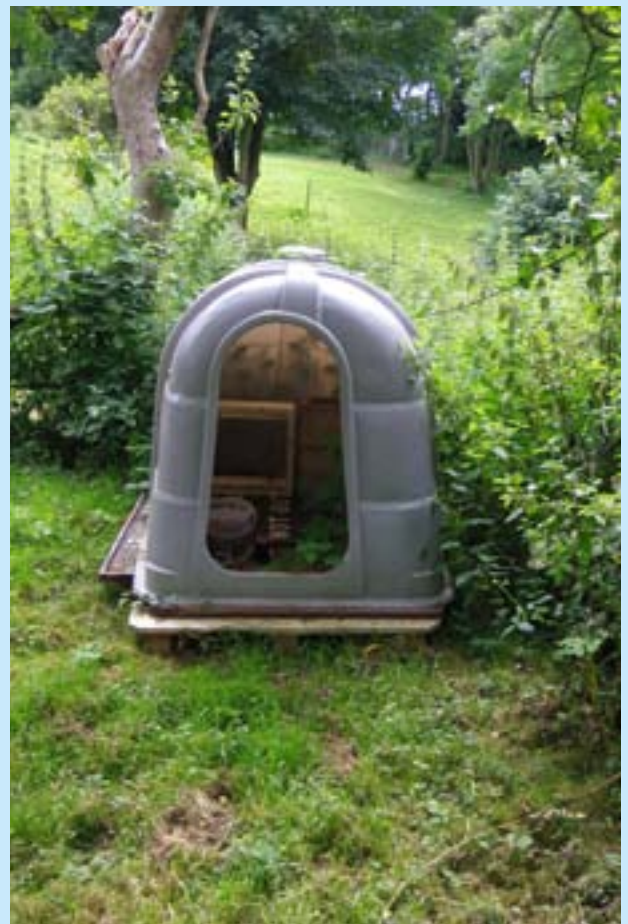
The archive for Brighton and Lewes Beepkeepers Association reference is AMS7164. On the web the archived documents show descriptions, but not scans of the documents themselves, so if you wish to view any you will have to order them prior to turning up. Anyone can visit The Keep by making an appointment by phone on 01273 482349 or by email: thekeep@eastsussex.gov.uk

Spitting bees

Link to a New Scientist article regarding water use by our bees.
<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2098161-bees-spew-water-at-their-hive-mates-when-the-temperature-rises/>

The Beehaus revisited!

Some members will recall the introduction of the "Beehaus", the environmental solution for the yuppy with a pocketful of spare cash and no knowledge of the craft. Regarded by most serious beekeepers as somewhat ridiculous. However this cool version was spotted in Bob Curtis's apiary and is of a much more purposeful provision.



Divisional Diary 2016

Outdoor meetings Meetings are 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. Location maps are on the website in the members section.

Programme

Out apiary meetings

April Saturday 23rd – Grassroots (revised date)

May Saturday 21st – Barcombe

June Sunday 19th – Heather McNiven's home apiary Newick, supering up

July Saturday 2nd – Stanmer – looking for disease

July Sunday 17th – Bob Curtis's, Woodingdean, different hive types

August Sunday 7th – Peacehaven, setting up a new apiary

August Saturday 21st – Grassroots

September Saturday 10th – Barcombe

Dates for your diary

6th August Rottingdean Fair

September 21st, First evening meet

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.blbees@hotmail.com

Secretary

Hilary Osman, Holly Tree Cottage, Norlington Lane, Ringmer, BN8 5SH T: 01273 813045

E: secretary@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Meetings Secretary

Mary King

Swarm coordination

Heather McNiven T: 07999 987097

E: heathermcniven@btinternet.com

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

Ian White, "Stanmer"

Amanda Millar, "Burgess Hill"

Heather McNiven "Knowlands Farm"

Sue Taylor "Big Park"

County Representatives

Bob Curtis, Ian White

Education coordinator

Heather McNiven

National Honey Show Representative

Vacant

Committee Members

Sue Taylor, Gerald Legg, Heather McNiven, Mary King,

Ian White

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:

Diane Steele, T: 01243 582612

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