

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers Newsletter



Volume 6 - June 2018

Editor: Norman Dickinson

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Next apiary meeting 3rd June at Grassroots with Amanda Millar

Amanda will be showing beginners at 1.30pm how to monitor for Disease, check for Varroa, assess Stores and Space and discuss a recent artificial swarm. More experienced beekeepers welcome from 2.30pm.

Important Note

We are unable to park near the apiary this time, please park in the layby on London Road, on the other side of the track to the apiary and walk down the lane to the apiary.

Barcombe Out Apiary Meeting 6th May - Photos by Bob Curtis



SBKA Bee Festival Saturday 19th May at Heathfield

The annual SBKA Festival of Bees was once again held on Saturday, 19th May 2018 at the Heathfield Community College in Heathfield. There were concerns that with the Royal Wedding between Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, now Duke and Duchess of Sussex, together with the FA Cup Final all occurring on the same day that attendances would be down. Whilst the numbers were down against last year, it was not as dramatic as some had anticipated.

As usual, there were a number of Trade Stands in the Trade Hall including (in no particular order) Ben and Maggie Pratt, Mantle Farm and Paynes. The National Bee unit had a table with plenty of information and guidance. Also in the Trade Hall was a stand manned by the High Weald Division selling bee friendly plants and honey. They also had a demonstration hive, which attracted a lot of attention, and taster pots of honey.



There were a smaller number of bee related stands in the main corridor all selling their wares, which included a range of products of the hive from Bee Cosmetics. The Monday Group and Black Bee Forge were both in attendance with bee related products for sale. Adjacent to the entrance Sussex Prairies Garden were promoting bee friendly practices in the garden.

Steve Gibson once again gave a demonstration on mead making which was well attended, especially when it was know that there were samples of mead to taste. Jonathon Coote once again gave a live bee handling demonstration outside and Maggie Pratt presented the Children's Workshop, which was partly interactive and was thoroughly enjoyed by the children.

The main lecture was given by Pam Hunter entitled Bee Keeping in the 21st Century with an update on the Asian Hornet and was very well attended and received.



Refreshments were available throughout the day with hot dogs by the East Grinstead Division, sandwiches by Hastings and Rother and drinks and cake by Brighton and Lewes Division.

There were no bees this year to be auctioned off and the number of bee related items put up for auction was also down this year, possibly as a result of the other "minor" events also taking place on the same day.

All in all it was still considered to be a very successful day, and we all look forward to next years event.

SBKA Bee Festival Saturday 19th May at Heathfield



Amanda advises

Last September, I had an outbreak of Greater Wax Moth in my garage, but after going through every box and stored frame I failed to find the source of the infestation. Well, this week I found it! It was my home made solar wax extractor, which I did not use at all last year (not enough sun?) and still had a bit of slum gum on the mesh. I found it just in time as the box was now full of Lesser Wax Moth larvae and eggs. They had demolished one side of the polystyrene sheet too so I have now re-made it, lined it with new foil and put it to use. Reading a book by Ron Brown, he suggests just using it for frames with some yellow wax in and leaving dark brood frames for boiling to remove more wax. But I boiled up some slumgum this morning and there was no noticeable wax on the top, so the solar extractor is efficient enough for me. Now all I need is some sun if you please.

Swarms seem to have started the week before the Bee Festival; much later than usual. Two of my largest have had artificial swarms carried out. So far the rest have just needed several supers, but I will have to be vigilant. If any beginners find a number of queen cells, they first need to decide whether they are emergency cells (usually on the face of the comb) indicating the loss of a queen, or swarm cells (most frequently but not exclusively around the edges; top, bottom or sides). Supercedure cells are less common at this time of year and usually are only one or two in number. Panicking and removing swarm cells will not stop the swarm from leaving and they will probably just make poor quality emergency queen cells. The most reliable method is an artificial swarm, merging later if you wish to return to a single hive. Three of the easiest and most reliable options, with diagrams, are to be found on the Brighton and Lewes website; information sheets page. I have heard of beginners' nuclei trying to swarm in the last few years, so don't assume you are safe from swarms in your first year.

It is also warm enough to do shook swarms if they need it, this is good if you have dark comb, Chalk-brood, dysentery etc. but best if there are at least 5 seams of bees to work with or they may not be able to generate the heat to build new wax quickly.

The oil seed rape is now nearly over, if you are in an area with OSR, within 3 miles then you need to remove any surplus honey and extract it straight away otherwise it will set hard in the combs. Mostly, I found it to be along the Downs when I looked, and fortunately I have none near me this year. The photo is of an area to the south and slightly east of

Lewes I think. As I write, the Horse chestnut and Hawthorn are nearly over and we need to make sure are large colonies do not go hungry if we have a June Gap before the blackberry nectar comes on line.



Yesterday (20th May) was the first World Bee Day and I took a photo of my bee house which I bought last year from Nurturing Nature Ltd. At the beginning of the month only a few cells had been laid down although the owners (and can you spot the lurking spider in the middle?) were spending the night in the tunnels (first photo), 16 days later they were all full and the spider had been ejected 2nd photo).

Research:

Certain pollens (and other parts of the plant) contain toxic compounds produced by the plant, possibly to deter herbivores, although the nectar (as an attractant to pollinators) is often much less toxic. Adult bees have been found to have a high tolerance of the pyrrolizidine alkaloids found in Viper's Bugloss pollen, at levels normally found when bees have access to a diverse diet, while the larvae are very susceptible. It was found that the worker jelly was produced with much lower levels than found in the pollen or beebread the nurse bees fed on.

This is another reason why bees should have access to a diverse range of flowers and explains why some solitary bees which feed their larvae on pollen, have specialised on certain plants. Almond pollen can also be toxic; pity the American bees forced to live on that monoculture while pollinating Californian almonds!

There are now four advantages for feeding larval honeybees on jelly; more rapid maturation than on a pollen diet; it is 90% digestible so there are less faeces to deal with; jelly has antimicrobial properties helping to reduce infections and finally it protects them from toxic pollen.

All EU countries have agreed a neonicotinoid ban on outdoor crops. Hurray!

Beekeepers and bees invite you to share their honey and wisdom

The sun is shining, the flowers are blooming, the bees are swarming and the beekeepers are buzzing.

With workshops, fairs and festivals to come, the Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers Association has a summer diary filled with events and meetings ahead to encourage awareness about the plight of the honey bee and other pollinators.

This weekend (Saturday, May 19) they will be heading to the Sussex Beekeepers Association Bee Festival held at the Heathfield Community College.

Live bee shows, workshops, mead making and talks about bee health will be taking place to raise awareness and teach people how to respect the honey bee and its pollinating peers.

The Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers Association will be selling their honey, hosting workshops and enlightening the public on the importance of bees.

“The whole purpose of the association is education,” said Ian White, chairman of the Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers Association.

“We aim to impart our many years of wisdom on people that are interested in keeping bees.

”With an increase in use of pesticides by farmers, urbanisation and invasive species such as the recent discovery of the Asian Hornet, pollinators are facing serious threats to their population.

“The problems they've got are endless,” said Mr White.

“We've lost so many wild flower meadows over the last 70 years, they need all the help they can get.

”Plantlife, a British conservation charity, recently published reports confirming 97 per cent of wildflower meadows have been lost.

Speaking about how everyone can help, Mr White said: “If you want to plant wildflowers, brilliant, or if you just have a patch of nettles and dandelions, great, that will encourage pollinators.”

“We go to a number of village fairs and sell our honey and try and educate the public about bees and pollinators and the problems that they are facing” he added.

Manek Dubash, who has been a member of the Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers Association for three years, said: “Bees without management aren't doing well, they get infected with diseases. I think that beekeepers are really an essential part of the bee ecosystem.

“It’s a really useful group and we learn a lot.

“There are a lot of people doing beekeeping which is so encouraging. I think this is going to be a great season.

”With more than 500 members across East Sussex, the likes of Mr White and his fellow beekeepers are striving to encourage interest in beekeeping.

To see the video and picture visit <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/beekeepers-and-bees-invite-you-to-share-their-honey-and-wisdom-1-8501599>

Article written by Katharine Hay and courtesy of the Sussex Express published 17th May 2018

Second snippet from Ian

A request for support from Brighton region for the COLOSS Hive Loss survey 2018 by Anthony Williams

In the last decade, elevated losses of western honey bee colonies have been observed, mainly in Europe and North America, but the underlying causes still remain unclear. In 2008, European and USA honey bee experts formed a network "COLOSS" realising that efforts by individual countries to identify the drivers of losses were unlikely to succeed, given the current consensus that causes are complex and can be different between regions and between the years. Now more than 1000 scientists are working together in this network in specific working groups.

The epidemiological working group have developed a standardised questionnaire to identify the underlying causal factors of losses and provide beekeepers sustainable management strategies.

We now invite you to fill in the questionnaire for 2018 which you will find below. This will enable us to compare your answers with other beekeepers. With your data we can estimate the relative risk of colony losses for beekeeper decisions such as Varroa treatment, migration of colonies and comb replacement. We also aim to identify differences in relative mortality risk between regions. This will enable follow up research projects in specific regions.

At your option your personal details may be recorded however we undertake not to disclose them to any third party to protect your privacy.

Finally your help is much appreciated. Please can I ask you to promote this survey and the questionnaire link through this open letter to as many English bee keepers as you are able to do so. Feel free to share the link by email, word of mouth, newsletters or social media and to your local bee keeping organisations. In doing so you will be making a contribution to tackling the problem of colony losses and ensuring that English data is represented as an equal partner in the COLOSS European community.

The survey link : <http://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/246176?lang=en>

Thanking you

Dr Anthony Williams

COLOSS Survey Coordinator for England

De Montfort University

A Member of Leicester and Rutland Beekeepers Association and Rugby Beekeepers Association

Email: anthony.williams@dmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0116 207 8468

Instructions for completing the survey -- You may wish to print out a copy of these instructions for reference --

1. Please read the questions carefully and answer as many as possible. Your cooperation is much appreciated.
2. Only complete the electronic "Official COLOSS" questionnaire **once**.
3. There are separate paper questionnaires from the National Bee Unit (NBU) in circulation and also pending a Winter loss survey from the British Bee Keepers Association (BBKA).

Though there is some overlap between the three surveys please treat each survey separately. Each organisation's questionnaire has been designed to meet different organisational purposes. At present efforts between the three organisations are uncoordinated it is hoped that in the future we will be able to coordinate our efforts.

4. Please note that **questions marked with * have to be completed.**
5. Excluding the informed consent question, final comments box there are 31 questions.
6. The survey asks questions about your bee keeping practice over the last 12 months, in particular the number of colonies you have in production and have lost over the winter period. You **may wish to consult your records** before starting the survey.
7. The questionnaire should be done in one sitting and should **take about 15 minutes** to complete.
8. However if you wish to complete the survey in more than one sitting to check your answers for example, you can do so by providing a User ID and password. You will be emailed a link to complete the survey. Click on the greyed out words "**Resume later**" on the **bottom left-hand corner** of the screen.
9. This questionnaire will be close on 5th June 2018.
10. The **second page** of the survey is an **informed consent** form, please select the checkboxes/statements that apply to you, finally on this page **place your initials in the "Other"** box at the bottom of the page to indicate your consent.
11. Finally on completing the survey you will have the option of printing out your survey responses for your records.
12. The survey is electronic form and **there is no provision for a paper copy**, however if you do not have online access or you are below the age of 18 **you may find someone to complete the survey on your behalf.**
13. If you have any questions about the survey then please contact Anthony Williams at the email address: anthony.williams@dmu.ac.uk
- 14.

About COLOSS

COLOSS is a pan European network of researchers, beekeepers and government representatives that provides resources and opportunities to disseminate latest bee keeping research.

The mission of COLOSS is to improve the well-being of bees (in particular the western honey bee *Apis mellifera*) at a global level.

Our goals include:

- Advocating for bees, and their well-being, especially to government legislators and administrators
- Coordinating international research, including the development of standard research methods
- Disseminating knowledge and training related to improving the well-being of bees

- Promoting youth development and gender balance among those studying, or those actively involved in promoting, the well-being of bees

The survey team is made up of in excess of 30 countries, most of the European regions are involved in COLOSS monitoring. Each national co-ordinator runs a similar survey in their own country, using a standardised questionnaire. The national co-ordinators are a mix of university researchers and academics (in biology, zoology, veterinary science, statistics, computer science) and professional beekeeping advisers, all with an interest in honey bee well-being. Many are themselves beekeepers. More information about COLOSS can be found at www.coloss.org

Address: Institute of Bee Health University of Bern Schwarzenburgstrasse 161 3003 Bern Switzerland

Anthony Williams works at De Montfort University in the school of Computer Science and Informatics. He has been keeping honey bees for 8 years and is a member of two regional associations. He quietly looks after a small apiary in his spare time. Anthony got involved in COLOSS at the beginning of the year and volunteered his services when he discovered that English hive survival data was no longer being collected and disseminated at a European level.

Neonics Again sent in by Gerald Legg

Neonic ban to help save Europe's bees
NewScientist 5 May 2018

Campaigners have hailed a decision by European countries to ban three neonicotinoid pesticides as a 'major victory'. These chemicals pose a threat to bees, according to an assessment by the European Food Safety Authority in February.

The European Union already restricts neonicotinoid use because of reports of their 'sub-lethal' effects, such as impairing bees' ability to forage and form colonies.

The EU will now completely ban their outdoor use, meaning they can only be used in greenhouses.

However, what farmers do in response will be crucial, says Dave Goulson at the University of Sussex, UK. "If these neonicotinoids are simply replaced by other similar compounds ... then we will simply be going round in circles," he says.

"What is needed is a move towards truly sustainable farming methods that minimise pesticide use, encourage natural enemies of crop pests, and support biodiversity and healthy soils," says Goulson.

Comment

It is not well known that neonics are used extensively in greenhouses and that a large majority of the plants bought at garden centres have been treated. So remember this when next you buy 'bee-friendly plants', or any for that matter, and up your borders in the garden – you are very likely to be making neonics available to your local insects including your bees.

B&L Beekeepers Google Group - Corrected email address

An email was recently sent out to all B&L members advising that a new Google Group for B&L Beekeepers was being set up. Unfortunately an incorrect email address was given resulting in members wishing to join the Group were having their emails returned. The correct email address should be

arianebee69@gmail.com

noting the absence of an 's' between 'bee' and '69'

Apologies for any inconvenience that this may have caused

More Asian Hornet news sent in by Patricia Clowser

Pam Hunter, who is a BBKA Trustee and member of the SBKA Executive Committee has sent this open letter to the SBKA

Dear members of Dover, Thanet, Kent, Medway and Sussex BKAs,

I am sure that you have all heard the recent news of an Asian Hornet queen being found in a cauliflower in Lancashire (Bury) (see below Ed) having come from Boston in Lincolnshire. It is important that all members are aware of the possibility, at this time of the year, of hibernating queens waking up, having tucked themselves away last autumn. This can happen anywhere but the Asian Hornet should not be confused with our native European hornet.

I am attaching a brief item on the hornet which is intended for the general public (rather than more knowledgeable beekeepers!). If you have any contacts on local newspaper, websites or radio, please try and get them to publish this. Please also note that the contact for reporting suspected Asian hornets is to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

The good news is that an app has been launched recently - The 'Asian Hornet Watch' app is available to download from the [Apple](#) and [Android](#) app stores.

Martin Smith, Public Affairs Manager at the British Beekeepers' Association, said:

This new app launched by Defra is a welcome addition to current reporting methods that have enabled beekeepers and members of the public to report possible sightings. The key to containment is catching outbreaks as early as possible and allowing fast tracking of the insects back to their nest. We encourage all our 25,000 beekeepers to install the app and use it if they see what might be an Asian hornet near their hives.

If you need any more information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

With kind regards,

Pam Hunter. Link Trustee

Foreign hornet found in the UK hiding in a cauliflower!

Hornets are large insects that look very like wasps, with black and yellow striped bodies. They can be quite frightening because they are so large but our native European hornet is not aggressive and you are most unlikely to be stung by one. Like wasps, they are carnivorous and feed on other insects, including wasps and bees. Unfortunately a different, foreign species, an Asian hornet, has been found in the UK. This species is a major threat to our honey bee colonies and many other pollinators; it is termed a 'non-native invasive species' which, if spotted, needs to be reported. All hornets, wasps and bumble bees don't last the winter, their nests dying out in the autumn. Only fertile queens survive the winter and they hibernate in all sorts of places, emerging in the Spring to start a new colony. It is thought that the Asian hornet may have been introduced to France in plant pots from China. It is now established in France and the Channel isles but we do not want it to become established here!

The first sightings in the UK were in the West Country in 2016 and 2017 but fortunately the nests were destroyed before any young queens had emerged. Unfortunately an Asian hornet queen has been found this spring in Bury (Lancashire) hiding in a cauliflower which came from Boston (Lincolnshire). The astute person finding the hornet photographed it but the hornet warmed up and flew off!

The Asian hornet differs from the European hornet in that it has a black thorax, rather than a yellow and black striped body. It also has yellow legs. There are excellent pictures of the hornet and similar insects on line – look up *Vespa velutina*. There are apps for iphones and androids and any sightings should be reported to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Photo Corner - All photos by Amanda Millar



Oil see rape as mentioned in
Amanda Advises article

Bee house, with bees and a lurking
spider spending the night in the tubes



16 days later, all full and spider ejected

Solar wax extractor just waiting for
the sun



Divisional Diary 2017/8

Outdoor meetings: Meetings are on Saturdays and Sundays. Unless otherwise, stated a 1.30pm start for beginners will be followed by a general meeting at 2.30pm. All meetings advertised will be weather permitting. Location maps are on the website in the member's section.

Summer Programme

14th April @ Barcombe with Heather McNiven.
29th April @ Cooksbridge with Ian White.
6th May @ Grassroots with Amanda Millar.
12th May @ Barcombe with Heather McNiven.
26th May @ Bob Curtis ASpiary
3rd June @ Grassroots with Amanda Millar.
29th July @ Grassroots with Amanda Millar.
Further dates to be confirmed

For your diary

8th April – B&L Tuition days in Hurstpierpoint aimed at new beekeepers **FULLY BOOKED**. The Tuition day scheduled for 29th April has unfortunately been cancelled due to insufficient numbers.
21st April – West Sussex BKA Convention – please see details in newsletter
Sat 19th May 2018 – Sussex Beekeeper Association Festival of Bees, Heathfield Community College.
7th to 9th June - South of England Show @ Ardingly Showground Details at <http://www.seas.org.uk>
30th June - B&L stand at the Saltdean Fayre.
4th August - B&L stand at the Rottingdean Fayre.

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 your newsletter

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

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