

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers Newsletter



Volume 10 - October 2018

Editor: Norman Dickinson

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

Forthcoming winter meeting Wednesday, 17th October @ 7.00pm

Our next winter meeting is on the 17th October at 7.00pm where the subject will be Winter Work - How to manage your hives over winter and prepare for Spring. There will be the chance to get "hands-on" experience making up frames, boxes etc. and you will also be able to quiz the Committee Members, who will actually be doing the instructing, on all matters bee related, or maybe not, who knows. All are welcome.

First winter meeting held on 19th September

The first meeting of the winter season was a talk by Geoffrey Redwood discussing the work of the charity Bees Abroad (relieving Poverty through Beekeeping)

The charity was formed in 1999 and currently has 15 Projects in existence, mainly in Africa. They provide education and technical advice on beekeeping together with business skills relevant to beekeeping, but the main purpose is to give support to beekeepers and their families in an attempt to lift the families out of poverty.

A question often asked is, why beekeeping? The simple answers are that there is a tradition of beekeeping in Africa and a low initial cost to set up apiaries. Working with local NGO's they are able to reach out to tribes and families with the NGO's providing a translation function and are able to monitor the progress of the various Projects and report back to Bees Abroad on the progress being made and what additional requirements will be needed when the charity next visits the Project.

In order to keep initial setting up costs down, local materials are used to construct the hives, which generally follow the pattern of a Top Bar Hive. The actual hive body can be constructed of almost anything, from used cut-down oil drums (clean of course), buckets, hollowed out logs and the like. Workshops are held where bamboo frames are used to construct the hive then all gaps are filled with mud, grass and dung. Local carpenters often make up the top bars in timber, which need to be relatively accurate in order to maintain the correct bee space.

The local beekeepers generally club together to create apiaries with a number of hives in them. Ingenious precautions are taken to prevent hive invasion by ants, who would destroy a hive very quickly. Apiaries are often located within a small cluster of trees, primarily to offer some shade to the hives but also to make securing the perimeter of the apiary easier using a form of stockade fencing to keep wild animals away and preventing the hives being knocked over.

The African bee, whilst smaller than the European bee, can be quite ferocious, and when in an aggressive mood have been known to follow several kilometers before retreating. Ingenuity is required by the beekeeper for protection and it is not unknown for plastic bags and mosquito netting to be used to make a bee suit. Far better to sweat than be stung!

Bees Abroad also offer guidance on bee related business skills. Many African beekeepers will use whatever container they can find to bottle the harvest and inevitably the honey will contain bits of comb, bee parts and anything else one can think of. Instruction is given on filtering the honey, often using double filters the same as British beekeepers use, brought out to Africa by the charity. The local beekeepers are also taught to use "proper" glass containers for their honey, which necessarily does not have to be the squat jars the we use. Instruction is also given on labeling, where it has been noted that "proper" glass containers with an attractive label can often increase the re-sale value of the honey.

More information on the work of Bee Abroad can be found at www.beesabroad.org.uk

Sussex Beekeepers Association 2018 Annual Convention

The Annual Convention will take place this year on Saturday 3rd November commencing at 9am. The venue is once again The Ashdown Room, Uckfield Civic Centre, UCKFIELD, TN22 1AE.

Speakers Confirmed so Far are:-

Clive de Bryn – author of “Practical Beekeeping’ – Keeping Healthy Bees

Christine Stevens – Honey Handling – From Hive to Jar

John Hendrie – Queen Rearing

Karin Alton – How to Improve your Green Spaces for Bees and other pollinators

Dr John Feltwell – Asian Hornet Update

The cost remains at £25 per person including a Buffet Lunch. For further information or to book, please send an email to [info @ sbkaconvention.org.uk](mailto:info@sbkaconvention.org.uk) .

You may also book via Eventbrite please note that Eventbrite charge a booking fee of £1.79 for using this service.



National Honey Show 2018 - REMINDER

The 2018 National Honey Show takes place from Thursday 25th October to Saturday 27th October at Sandown Park in Esher. Details at www.honeyshow.co.uk

There is a full schedule of lectures over the 3 days, details of which can be found at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lectures-and-workshops.php> In addition, the Programme of Workshops will be available for booking at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/workshop-booking.php> from 1st September.

Those members interested in entering exhibits can download the Full Show Schedule at: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2018/2018-Schedule-Full.pdf> The Entry Form is downloadable from: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2018/2018-Entry-Form-Print-ver1.pdf>

This year they have three new classes and a couple of changes from last year, these are:

- A short video clip of 45-60 seconds duration on an interesting beekeeping topic
- A single jar of honey from a charity supporting beekeeping activities overseas
- Three jars of different types of honey.
- Instead of 6 biscuits, we have changed the class to 6 small gluten free cakes (any recipe containing honey)

The entry deadline for classes 95 to 102, which include photography, microscopy, videos and essays and includes the new class 101 for a clip on a beekeeping subject is 10th September, entry form for all other classes to be submitted by 8th October.

A selection of photos from the B&L BBQ held on 2nd Sept



A big thank you goes to Heather for allowing us to descend on her bungalow and for putting on an excellent spread of food. Thanks also go to Bob Curtis for sending in these photos and to all those who attended, making this a most enjoyable afternoon. Of course, the fine weather did help, not so certain about the "band"!

Amanda advises

The bees should all be fed, treated and tucked up for winter now. Because of the good summer I have not had to do much syrup feeding. I also had some winter stores rescued in the spring, stored in the deepfreeze, to give back to a couple of colonies. One colony had its full complement of stores as honey so needed no topping up. It is a shame that when I did their final health/brood/stores check in the second half of September, this colony only had sealed brood, no eggs or larvae and I could not find a queen. I shall have to check them again, having given them two empty drawn frames next to the brood as they had little space but might end up harvesting another 30 lbs honey if I have to cull them. Even though I could not find a specific problem, although during the summer they had some patchy brood unlike the rest of my garden colonies; their temper is good and no queen cells. I am a bit uneasy why they may have lost their queen so shall not merge them with the adjacent colony in case it is one of the symptom-free viruses. Apart from this one, I shall not be going into the colonies for some months. All my entrance blocks are already 5.5mm so I don't need to put mouse guards on, but if you have higher than this, remove them and put metal mouse guards in their place. One of my checks is to ensure they have some insulation on the crownboard now the feeders are off, and put straps round those in windy out-apiaries. I also do another varroa check in late October, by insert or dusting, as I know I will get a late influx of varroa from neglected, dying colonies within robbing distance of my bees, and will probably have to do more dusting. I should be scraping supers and frames and storing things away for the winter but am still held up by my injured thumb; most annoying. Meanwhile we have to negotiate stacks of supers in the garage, awaiting attention.

Up to now, touch wood, we have not had any very cold weather although tonight (23rd Sept) it might go down to 5 degrees; the coldest yet, so with the earlier warmth and that bit of rain many nice bee plants have had a second flowering. I am happy to see bees all over my borage, calendula, campion and meadow cranesbill. I



think the sedum is over although it retains its attractive red for some time. My scabious, rudbeckia and wild yellow wallflower are still going strong and the asters and caryopteris have recently come into flower. Hoverflies and Carder bumblebees in particular seem to like a large clump of wild Catnip *Nepeta cataria*. I still have time to collect seed and take cuttings of these. My garden is pretty stuffed with crocuses etc so this year I have bought bulbs of several different alliums which bees love. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the exact locations of existing bulbs so deciding where to put them so they are not on top of something else might be challenging. I have the same problem with some bee plants I sowed last autumn to plant out somewhere now the soil is moist. Slugs and draught delayed me in the spring; Caryopteris, Tansy, Perovskia, Verbena bonariensis, Agastache anisata.



I brought my bait hive into the shed last week and as usual accidentally disturbed a solitary bee's nest under the edge of the roof. Last year it was the red mason bee, this year a leaf-wrapped tube of a leafcutter bee which has remained intact thank goodness. See photo. I shall carefully store it in a cool location and hope to be around when they emerge next year. I have also brought all my solitary bee houses into my cold greenhouse for the winter

as there was a lot of rain forecast this week-end and they



are all full up now. There are several tunnels used by leafcutter bees and I have a suspicion at least one has emptied and reused a tunnel already filled by the earlier Red Mason bees. I might have to make some more homes for next year.

Asian Hornet nest in Fowey found & destroyed

An Asian Hornet nest has been found in Fowey in Cornwall and destroyed by bee inspectors.

It was on Friday 31st August a beekeeper in the Fowey area found 2 Asian Hornets in a trap he'd set up near his beehives. They were positively identified by the Non Native Species Secretariat and a surveillance zone was set up on Tuesday (Sept 4). Killing traps and feeding traps with meat and sweet baits were deployed and there was a lot of hornet activity around them. By timing their visits back to the bait, inspectors from the National Bee Unit were able to track them back to their nest.

The nest was detected on Thursday (Sept 6) and destroyed in the evening, when the hornets would have returned to the nest, by using CO2 gas to carry an active ingredient called bendiocarb. The nest was removed this morning at 0700.

It is described as a small nest, about the size of a child's football, and was situated about a metre from the ground in a bramble patch.

Genetic analysis is being carried out to see if the hornets are from Europe or a new incursion brought in on goods from China for example.

Genetic tests have shown that the Tetbury and Woolacombe nests in 2017 were two separate incursions from France.

A map showing all the incidents of Asian Hornet incursion in the UK can be found at

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-map>

Trapping advice

At the moment, Defra is recommending that MONITORING traps are put out by beekeepers in all areas of the country where at the moment we do not think an incursion has occurred.

Once an Asian Hornet has been positively identified in an area then KILL traps should be used. This is in the expectation that if Asian Hornets are in the area then they will be trapped and identified.

The by-catch in these traps will be small compared to the damage caused by the Asian Hornets if the nests are not found.



Asian Hornet nest found in Jersey

Big Wasp Survey 2017 - Results are now in

An email with the results of the 2017 Wasp Survey was recently sent to Sue Taylor and I reproduce that email below for your information.

Subject: Big Wasp Survey 2017 – The results are in!

Dear Wasp Lover,

Thank you for taking part in the **Big Wasp Survey 2017**, in conjunction with the Royal Entomological Society and BBC's Countryfile. We were heartened by the support and enthusiasm received for the project. In total we received 6,680 wasps from 1,294 people providing us with an excellent snapshot of which wasps live where across the UK. You can see the results here:

<http://www.bigwaspsurvey.org/2017-results>

We were delighted to find that, as we'd hoped, no queens were captured as part of the survey. As only queens survive past the autumn, this means that the 2018 population was unaffected by our survey. We were also relieved to find that there were no specimens of the invasive Asian hornet *Vespa velutina*, though there were two sightings in 2017. This is an area that we'll be keeping a close eye on in future surveys.

Thanks to your support, we now have a strong baseline on which to track wasps over the coming years. Repeated collections from the same location are particularly valuable, as they allow us to track species movements and environmental impacts year-on-year, so we very much hope that you'll be able to take part again this year. [Registration is now open](#) so please take the time to sign up for the Big Wasp Survey 2018 running from Saturday August 25th to September 8th.

You can register for the 2018 Big Wasp Survey here: <http://www.bigwaspsurvey.org/sign-up-for-2018>

Many thanks for your continued support
Seirian and Adam

P.S. If you haven't already, check out Adam's BBC Radio 4 programme discussing the importance of insect research and featuring the Big Wasp Survey. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09qfwpt>

You can also follow the Big Wasp Survey on social media:

<https://www.facebook.com/BigWaspSurvey>

<https://twitter.com/bigwaspsurvey>

<https://www.instagram.com/bigwaspsurvey>

Swarm collection by Heather McNiven

These bees were found 10' up an apple tree. Pat Clowser and Ken Isted helped me collect them and it was probably the easiest feral colony collected this year. The comb was gently sliced across above the bees and lowered into a poly Nuc. Such gentle bees but their food stock was very low, and Pat has taken them home to give a lovely syrup feed. As they were at the mercy of wasps and hornets in the tree, I doubt they would have survived the winter, and now have a very good chance of seeing the Spring under Pat's care.

Thank you Heather for the photo

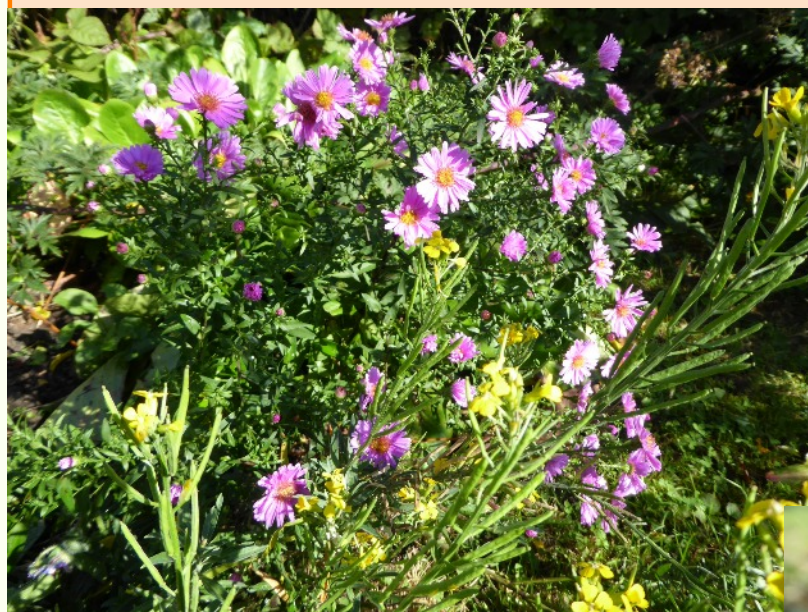


Photo Corner



What good brood can look like, and there were more frames like this. Thanks to Pat Clowser for sending this in.

A couple more photos from the B&L BBQ



Bee friendly flowers, sent in by Amanda Millar.

Top Left - Asters.

Top Right Caryopteris.

Bottom Right - Wild Wallflower.

B&L Divisional Diary 2018/19

Indoor meetings: Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, October to March at Cliffe church hall, Lewes, unless otherwise stated. Members are invited at 7.00pm to assist with setting out chairs etc ready for a 7.15pm start. Non-members are always welcome.

Winter Programme

~~19th September 2018 – Work of Bees Abroad. Speaker: Geoffrey Redwood.~~

17th October 2018 - Winter Work & how to manage your hives over winter and prepare for Spring.

21st November 2018 - Colony Nutrition. Speaker: Pam Hunter.

16th January 2019 - B&L 2019 AGM with the Honey and Mead Show. Honey Judge: Harold Cloutt.

20th February 2019 - Topic and Speaker to be advised.

20th March 2019 - Small Scale Queen Rearing in my Backyard. Speaker: Mike Cullen.

For your diary

~~2nd Sept @ Newick, annual BBQ with Heather McNiven.~~

30th Sept - Westdean Green Community Event, help required, contact Judith at newapiary@hotmail.com

25th October to 27th October The 2018 National Honey Show Sandown Park, Esher.

3rd November - SBKA Annual Convention in Uckfield.

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

Ian White

E: landa.pinehill@yahoo.co.uk

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

Ian White

Webmaster

Gerald Legg, E: gerald@chelifer.com

Newsletter editor

Norman Dickinson, 34 Abergavenny Rd, Lewes, BN7 1SN

T: 07792 296422 E: editor.blbees@outlook.com

Librarian

Vacant

Out-Apiary Managers

Amanda Millar: - "Grassroots"

Heather McNiven: - "Knowlands Farm"

County Representatives

Bob Curtis, Ian White

Education coordinator

Amanda Millar

National Honey Show Representative

Norman Dickinson

Committee Members

Lionel Reuben, Ian White, Pat Clowser, Hilary Osman,

Norman Dickinson, Sue Taylor, Gerald Legg, Heather

McNiven, Mary King, Dominic Zambito

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.

Regional Bee Inspector - Sandra Grey, Mobile: 07775 119430, email: sandra.grey@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector - Diane Steele, Mobile: 07775 119452, email: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk

