

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers



Newsletter

Volume 6 – June 2019

Editor: Norman Dickinson

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

SBKA Annual Bee Market – 19th May 2019

The SBKA annual Bee Market was held as usual at the Heathfield Community College in Old Heathfield on 19th May, and this year, unlike last years event, there were a number of live bees available for auction. The only clash with a major event this year was the FA Cup Final, but it did not appear to reduce footfall too much.

Most unusually this year there were no smaller bee related stands in the Main Corridor and we are not quite certain why this occurred. The three main traders, Ben & Maggie Pratt, Mantle Farm and Paynes were in attendance in the Trade Hall where trading

appeared to be brisk.

High Weald also had there stand in the Trade Hall selling plants friendly to pollinators and of course honey. As per last year, they also had their demonstration hive on view.

We were pleased to have Steve Gibson back, who gave an excellent talk in the Lecture Room on mead production, which again proved to be popular.

The children were again entertained by Maggie Pratt by presenting the Children's Workshop.

This year Heather McNiven and Bob Curtis gave the live bee

presentation outside on the "mound", much to the delight of the younger visitors to the event.

As in previous years, Hastings & Rother had a good selection of sandwiches for sale whilst East Grinstead set-up stall outside selling hot dogs, and I must say that these were absolutely delicious with a slight sweetness to the onions. Hot drinks and a varied selection of cakes were available from Brighton & Lewes with almost nothing left at the end of the day.

Planning will start shortly for next years event, which we all look forward too.

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Tens of thousands of bees removed from house

BBC News 4th April 2019 and sent in by Lionel Reuben

About 20,000 bees have been removed from a house in Coventry end rehomed with a beekeeper in Lichfield.

It took six hours for David Bird from Delta Pest Control to remove the colony, which had grown to 1.c cubic metre in size.

It is thought the bees were able to thrive in a cavity due to the mild winter.

After a period of quarantine the bees will be put to work in an apiary.

The full video can be seen at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-47813760/tens-of-thousands-of-bees-removed-from-house>



Forthcoming winter meetings:

- No further winter meeting until October 2019

Forthcoming summer out-apiary meetings:

- See rear panel

In next months edition:

- Amanda Advises
- Asian Hornet Action Team
- Report on the Honey event at South of England Show
- Contributions from our members

Asian Hornet Action Team Report by Manek Dubash

So far, so good.

No Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina*) have been reported on the UK mainland this year. But as we're all aware, they're alive and kicking not far away in France, and on Jersey. They have also recently been reported on Guernsey, where a plan to trap queens as they emerge from hibernation is underway. Eight nests were reportedly found on the island in 2018. There's more about the Guernsey plan here: <https://www.gov.gg/springqueening>

So it is likely to be only a matter of time before they make it here – if they're not here already – so we need to maintain our vigilance. This includes the building of simple non-lethal traps and if you haven't yet built one, you can download a PDF of how to do so here: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadNews.cfm?id=122>

Counter-measures

Other counter-measures include baffles and meshes. These dissuade hornets from grabbing bees as they take off. A good example of the latter is this, which can be simply built and uses a mesh size of 13mm – big enough for bees to get through easily but daunting for a heftier hornet.

Other dissuasion techniques include adding a fabric skirt to underneath the entrance to dissuade hornets from hanging around under the hive. This idea comes from Michael Judd, a beekeeper in France, and there more his efforts in his blog here: <https://honeybeesuite.com/beekeeping-with-asian-hornets/>

I've also seen people using a strip of clear corrugated roofing plastic nailed over the entrance. It allows bees to leave and enter only from the sides, and the clear plastic is



alleged to confuse the Asian hornet, whose technique is hawk around the entrance.

A more expensive technique is to buy an ApiShield from Thorne's, although our resident expert Amanda Millar was not entirely convinced it was worth the money and extra effort entailed – see our newsletter of December 2017.

On-going

As always, make sure you have the Asian Hornet app on your phone, get the traps up, and keep an eye out for *V. Velutina*.

I'd add a reminder too that on Jersey, the involvement of the wider public is crucial to hornet spotting, even if many of the reports are mis-identifications. It's not helped by sensational reporting, such as that of one Kent newspaper which recently went big on the sighting of one European hornet, reporting it as a giant Asian hornet.... That said, talk to friends and family about *V. velutina*.

And if you need more information or you identify a hornet, or if you want to join the AHAT, please contact me. Manek's contact details can be found on the back cover.

News from the Editor

On page 5 you will find the flyer advertising the South of England Show, to be held on 6th, 7th & 8th June. More information can be found at <https://www.seas.org.uk/info/competing/competing-south-england-show/bees-honey/>.

A Schedule of Classes & Prize List together with a booking form is also available should you wish to enter honey, mead, beeswax etc.

Should you also wish to steward at the event then please contact chief.steward@deodar.org.uk.

The 2019 (88th) National Honey Show will be held again at the Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey from Thursday 24th to Saturday 26th October 2019.

Membership applications has just opened and the subscription remains unchanged from last year at £20, which gives admission for all three days. A reduction of £1 will apply if you decide not to have a Show Scheduled posted to you, however, the Schedule will be available for download in August. Membership subscription renewals and new membership applications can be made at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/membership.php>

The Lecture Programme is now available to view on the website at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lectures-and-workshops.php> and covers a wide range of subjects, including those for beginners, all of which are only available on Saturday, 26th October.

A series of Be Craft Research Lectures are scheduled to take place on Friday, 25th October.

The Programme of Workshops is still to be finalised and will appear on the website at the beginning of September 2019. Please note that there will be an additional non-returnable booking fee for each workshop that you wish to attend. There may be a small additional charge for some workshops to cover the cost of materials.

Volunteers are needed to act as stewards so please contact Bill Fisher if you are able to offer your service via email at chiefsteward@honeyshow.co.uk. As the show grows, more people are required for stewarding duties, and there is a meal allowance for each day that you volunteer.

Amanda advises...

I noticed the Oil Seed Rape flowers were fading on 15th May so I hope those un/lucky enough to be near it have been able to take any honey off before it granulates. The problem arises if there is not really enough to be worth taking off, as may well be the case with low-nectar modern hybrid OSR, but enough to contaminate the rest of the summer crop causing it to set later. I am thankful my nearest is only a few fields, and just over 3 miles away as the bee flies and I have only seen one or two with yellow faces. Now mine are coming in with brick red pollen from the horse chestnuts in the next few gardens, and it has sugar rich nectar so I am hoping my bees will prefer that now. There has certainly been a strong odor of nectar, but not quite as pleasant as the blackberry or early flowers I think. We may get another early maincrop this year. My cultivated blackberries are all in flower (mid May) and the wild ones are usually 2-3 weeks behind. Most of the alliums I planted last year are in flower and visited by various bee species.

I have been kept busy catching up with my cleaning and sterilizing of super frames – because I have run out! This is partly because I am now almost completely on shallow boxes so needing more, but also because I carried out 5 artificial swarms and a split (well nuc really); all the while they have been quite busy bringing in nectar and I tend to give them space in advance of their requirements to prevent them making swarm preparations. The split/nuc was on my equal-best colony, which was showing no signs of swarming (that's partly why it is one of my best; no trouble, big and healthy), but I wanted some queens off it and the parent to be established and mated before the main flow. So scraping frames until late into the night and I had a big boil-up today of 5 boxes worth of frames, but I am still going to need to buy some new frames for the Divisional out apiary where the inconsiderate so-and-so's required 3 of the 4 to have artificial swarms this month. I will go tomorrow to

see if the queens have variously hatched and/or mated. Then by mid June I should be able to merge them back in time for the main flow, perhaps keeping both parts from the best colony. Actually I cannot complain about their timing this year, it is spot on. Not too early that they caught me on the wrong foot but in time to be sorted by the nectar flow.

At home the odd spells of really nice weather have enabled my first 4 Apidea to all mate and now have eggs. I cannot remember this sort of success before. However, the parent colony of these has lost its virgin (I did see her at one point) so may have to use one to requeen it. The old Queen in the Artificial Swarm part is slowly increasing but she is a late 2015 supersedure so I can forgive her not laying like a one-year-old. I expect she will be superseded this year; I shall miss her.

I cannot over-emphasise how useful it is to have a batch of Apidea in the wings in case of queen loss. (See instructions on Brighton and Lewes BK website, information page). Virgins mate much quicker from Apidea, and very few bees are required so do not deplete the main colonies, whereas large colonies can take 3-4 weeks before finding eggs, by which time all the brood has hatched and unless you keep a close eye on them and give them a frame of young brood now and then, you could easily end up with irretrievable drone laying workers. So I keep a note of dates and check a day after she was due to hatch to make sure it was a good hatch. For example one I checked today in which I had left two queen cells, one had hatched yesterday and she had then gone to the other and stung her to death and the bees had started to tear down the cell. In the Apidea I heard the virgins piping to ascertain whether any competitors were present, which she needed to despatch. Then about 10 days later I check for eggs. If no eggs, then by this time only a little sealed brood remains (perfect for a little icing sugar knock-down of any phoretic mites) and if they seem out of

sorts or I don't see the queen/virgin I put a frame of young brood to prove a virgin is still there (if not they can start emergency queen cells on it).



Keep up with their space requirements for nectar, which they need to spread out to process so require more space than the finished honey will occupy, and I am afraid swarming is still on the cards, especially if they run out of room.

In the news: on World Bee Day, on 18th May; Bee Market Day, a report was published by WWF and Buglife about the status of bees in eastern England. The author Laurie Jackson is a friend and only lives a mile from me - small world. *L Jackson, L. (2019) East of England Bee Report: A report on the status of threatened bees in the region with recommendations for conservation action. Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust, Peterborough.*

Of the 228 species recorded in Eastern England, 17 species (7%) are regionally extinct, 25 species (11%) are threatened and 31 species (14%) are of conservation concern. They identified loss and fragmentation of specialised habitat; changing land management leading to loss of key forage plants, nesting and overwintering sites; pesticides and pollution; climate change; invasive species, disease and pathogens. Their recommendations include improving honey bee husbandry and management practices as one of the principle sources of cross species disease spread, so lets all do our bit to keep clean colonies and equipment so we do not spread viruses etc. to our other bees.

Easter Swarm by Hilary Osman

Easter midday, I received a call from a mentee.” My bees have swarmed”, my response is do you know where they have gone? Shirley was with her Mum, and not at home, but the noise of the swarm had alerted her husband that things were not right in the hive.

Shirley drove home and told me she would go and look for them. Their property and grounds are not small, and amazingly within 5 minutes informed me, that she had found them up a tree. I finished sorting out my bees, and drove off to meet Shirley and Joe her husband.

When I arrived, yes they were up a tree, and Joe had already cut off

a couple of branches. Except the ladders they had just weren't long enough. Nuc box and some dirty comb I thought. Joe had other ideas.” I have a JCB in the barn, if you will go up in the bucket”. I was taught the Banksmans hand signals for up, down, forward, and a little bit more. Sorted. Never been in a bucket before and a new experience to cross off the list. There are times when a JCB bucket seems safer than a long ladder, or a rotten tree.

The swarm was collected and hived later that day. Only problem for Shirley and Joe was that they forgot to put the lamb in the oven for their family Easter meal.!



A extra snippet from Amanda

Have I lost my queen? June 2019

I have had a number of people saying they have lost their queen; it is the time of year when swarms and queen cells might lead to queen loss through; inappropriate action (for example, do not remove all your queen cells unless you are sure you have a mated or virgin queen in your colony, and queen cell removal is not a method of swarm control, but is the best way to end up with a queenless colony); the weather (when your precious virgin fails to return from a mating flight); accident (the queen comes out of the hive and cannot get back if clipped). So I thought a few pointers might help people determine whether their colony is queenright and avoid a queenless situation.

Good records are essential; when you saw queen cells and the stage they are at (eg egg, open larvae, sealed), and always be aware of the stages of brood present in the colony. Within a week of all the brood hatching and in the absence of any stage of queen (both of which provide an inhibiting pheromone) then irrecoverable

drone laying by workers could commence.. This can be prevented by adding a frame of young brood from another healthy colony before the last worker brood has hatched out. If they have no queen they can also use the young larvae to rear a new queen. It also provides nurse bees needed to look after your queen.

When removing a queen as part of your standard swarm control (See information sheets on B&L website), thin the queen cells to a couple, keep a note of dates (3 days egg, 5 days open, 7/8 days sealed). Check a day or two after she was due to hatch to make sure she hatched properly. Then wait 10 days before inspecting. Best to inspect early or later in the day as queens often go out to mate between 11-3pm. In a large colony it can take 3 weeks for her to mate, and a further couple of days before she starts to lay; in a mini mating hive a week or so. If no eggs are seen after 10 days, and the rest of the brood is nearly hatched give them a frame of young brood. Young queens are difficult to spot, but signs of the presence of a queen are in the behavior; calm and content if they

know they have a queen, restless and agitated if no queen. Have they prepared areas of brood comb for her to lay in by polishing the brood cells? (See Photo) If the brood area is clogged with nectar it is not a good sign, either they need space or have no queen. After 3-4 days check the frame you put in for emergency cells, thin to 2 open ones with fat larvae and lots of royal jelly and hope they can sort themselves out. If the emergency one fails too, then merge with an adjacent colony as the workers are becoming so old by now you might as well start again. It's a good idea to have two colonies so you can rectify the occasional queen loss.



Ardingly Spring Live Show – Report by Norman Dickinson

Brighton and Lewes were invited to put up a stand and give a talk on beekeeping at the recent Ardingly Spring Live Show held over the bank holiday weekend, 5th and 6th May. The location was in the Gardening Theatre opposite the food hall so plenty of visitors coming in and out.

Heather kindly agreed to man the stand and to sit on the Gardening Panel, which also included Jean Griffin, BBC gardening presenter for BBC Kent and Sussex, and who also organised the Gardening Theatre.

There was a large amount of interest shown by the public over the two days and Heather even managed to sell a few jars of honey.



South of England Show, 6th 7th and 8 June 2019

Bees & Honey
2019 at the...




SOUTH OF
ENGLAND
SHOW
6,7,8 JUN 19

Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6TL

COMPETITION SHOW
BEES & BEEKEEPING DISPLAYS
BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT SALES
SALES OF HONEY & HIVE PRODUCTS
TRAINING & MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
OBSERVATION HIVE & DEMONSTRATIONS

An annual event providing a unique opportunity for Associations and their beekeeping members throughout the South of England to participate; whether in competition, or in sharing passions for beekeeping with a public always asking "how are the bees?"

Cash prizes for each class.

Trophies awarded to the winner of the "Bounty from the Hive" class and for "Most Points in Honey Classes".

BBKA Certificate of Merit awarded for The Best Exhibit in the Honey Classes.

Any Exhibitor submitting 5 or more Show Entries will receive a **FREE Day Ticket** for any one day of the Show.

Other Exhibitors may purchase an **Exhibitor Day Ticket (£12*)** for any one day of the show.

Full price Day Tickets are £21.*
**price to be confirmed*

Get together with your fellow members to register entries on behalf of your BKA.

Be smart and arrange for one person to deliver all the entries from your Division or Association.

Honey Show Schedules and

Honey Entry Forms will be available to view and download from the **South of England Show** website by January 2019

Entries will be accepted up to the 1st June 2019

Help as a Show Steward for a day (or more) with the live demonstrations, observation hives, honey sales and information stands.
Contact:-
chief_steward@deodar.org.uk

Promote your Association or Division with leaflets or notices about Membership, Training and Taster Days to display on the Info. Stand.
Contact:-
beesandhoneyinfo@gmail.com

Visit us at
<http://www.seas.org.uk/info/competing/competing-south-england-show/bees-honey/>

Bees brought Bavarians together. And they have a lesson for us all

By Christian Bock. Article sent in by Lionel Reuben from the Guardian, 19th Feb 2019

In a recent campaign Germans of all outlooks stood up against corporate greed and political apathy – and won.

Last week, Bavarians forced their state legislature to change farming policies with the most successful petition in the state's history. And while the law proposed by the petition covers a range of measures, it's no surprise that campaigners' rallying cry quickly became "save the bees". Bees stand for diligence, dedication and orderliness. But they are also a symbol of our relationship with nature – and everything that has been wrong with it for decades. Bees are emblematic of how the fight to save our planet and stop runaway climate change cannot wait. They are our canary in the coalmine.

Bees are essential for our food supply: apples, courgettes, almonds – one in every three bites we eat depends on bees and other pollinators. But soil sealing and industrial, monocultural agriculture using bee-harming pesticides have caused a massive decline in bee populations worldwide, to the extent that apple farmers in China have to pollinate their trees by hand.

Instead of being good beekeepers, taking care of nature so it takes care of us, we have neglected it, endangering our own long-term survival. Corporations that are more focused on maximising profits than their responsibility towards people and the planet have a pivotal role to play in saving the bees – and, ultimately, the planet. Ironically, it is a German company, Bayer, that since the acquisition of Monsanto has become the epitome of this exact type of toxic agro-industry, promoting monocultures and selling pesticides that harm bees and destroy biodiversity. And while the consequences of this might not yet show on our plates, they can be seen in changed landscapes – literal and political.

The organisations and voters carrying the successful campaign in Bavaria weren't just a loud

minority of environmentalists. They were a broad and diverse coalition, of progressives and conservatives, who want to preserve our precious ecosystems in the face of damaging industrial farming practices. It is this same combination of progressives and conservative conservationists that got Winfried Kretschmann elected

Bavaria's remarkable campaign to save the bees can give us all cause for optimism. Where politicians failed to protect the environment and put corporate profits first, Bavarians stood up and have taken power back in their hands. Empowering people to fight for our planet is at the heart of what the organisation I work for does, it is why SumOfUs supported



Bees are emblematic of how the fight to save our planet and stop runaway climate change cannot wait. They are our canary in the coal mine.' Photograph: Sachelle Babbar/Zuma Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

as Germany's first Green party governor in Bavaria's neighbouring state Baden-Württemberg. Kretschmann's philosophy that environmental politics are key to preserving creation is key to understanding the foundation of the historical win for the bees in Christian-conservative Bavaria.

The campaign's messaging also helped to bring people of different political views together. For example, instead of putting all the blame for loss of biodiversity on farmers, the campaign explicitly highlighted the struggles of small farms as one of the issues to address. Maybe out of reflex, many farmers still felt scapegoated, but this inclusive approach nevertheless helped to build bridges. During a time in which heated and highly divisive debates about rightwing populism and diesel car bans in cities dominate the public discourse in Germany, finding common ground was critical.

the campaign in Bavaria. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of SumOfUs members are calling on the EU to take immediate steps to improve the way it tests all pesticides, to ensure bees are protected.

Climate change, our changing landscapes and the global loss of biodiversity are increasingly visible. Faced with this, people of all political backgrounds are rising up, like in Bavaria. Many of these people wouldn't have considered themselves activists before – and maybe still don't. But they see the necessity for change and are willing to take a stand for it – some of them even wearing a bee costume.

• *Christian Bock is a Berlin-based campaigner for SumOfUs, an organisation using people power to hold the biggest companies in the world to account.*

Photo corner : Photos from the SBKA 2019 Bee Festival



More photos from the Bee Festival



B&L Divisional Diary 2018 / 2019

Outdoor meetings:

Meetings are held on Saturdays or Sundays as noted below, between April and September. Unless otherwise stated all meetings will start at 2:00pm and are subject to weather permitting. Location maps are on the website in the member's section.

Summer programme:

~~Sun 31st March: Grassroots – Working party.~~

~~Sun 7th April: Barcombe – Spring cleaning in the apiary.~~

~~Sat 13th April: Hove – CANCELLED~~

~~Sun 28th April Cooksbridge – Building supers & frames.~~

~~Sat 11th May: Barcombe – Swarm control.~~

~~Sun 19th May: Newick – Queen rearing.~~

Sat 1st June: Hove - What do I see in my hive?

Sun 23rd June: Grassroots - Supering

Sat 6th July: Hove - TBA

Sun 21st July: Grassroots - Harvesting Honey

Sun 1st Sept: Grassroots - Winter Preparations

Sun 8th Sept: Newick - B&L annual BBQ

Dates for your diary:

~~2nd March: SBKA AGM and Spring Meeting, Peredur Centre, East Grinstead, RH19 4NF~~

~~12th April to 14th April: BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University, TF10 8NB.~~

~~27th April: WSBKA Annual Bee Market and Auction, Brinsbury College, Pulborough.~~

~~18th May: SBKA Annual Bee Market in Heathfield.~~

6th to 8th June: South of England Show, Ardingly.

3rd August: Rottingdean Fair

15th September: Westdean Fair

24th to 26th October: National Honey Show, Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey.

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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.

Contributions to your newsletter

Contributions for the newsletter, including photos can be sent, preferably by email, to the editor. Please refer to panel above for details. Please limit to a maximum of 900 words. Copy to be sent no later than the 12th of the month preceding the month of publication. Photos etc. for the website should be emailed to our Gerald Legg

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