

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers Newsletter



Volume 2 – February 2019

Editor: Norman Dickinson

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

B&L 2019 AGM and Honey Show

Report and photos by Norman Dickinson

The B&L 2019 AGM was held in the Cliffe Church Hall, Lewes on 16th January 2019, and was attended by nearly 50 members.

Ian White, our current Chairman, before presenting his report for the 2018 season stated that he would not be standing for re-election this year.

The Division attended ten events during the summer with the Rottingdean Fair being very successful with almost £1,000 of hive products sold, and we will continue to have a presence at these events if invited.

B&L have 5 members on the SBKA Committee, including

the Chairman and President, although with Pats reign as Chairman ending this year where it is expected that she will takeover the Presidents role from Amanda Millar.

Lionel Reuben has also stated that he intends resigning as B&L President.

The B&L website received over 5,000 hits last year with 500 of them in June alone.

Pat Clowser followed Ian with the Treasurers Report, where she reported that we had a healthy bank balance even though we actually made a loss over the last year, mainly due to subsidising goods for purchase by the membership,

setting up costs for the Divisional Apiary in Hove and for replacing old and worn-out equipment.

Amanda and Heather gave their apiary reports. Heather reported that it was a quiet year at Barcombe with 4 colonies and a 100lb of honey collected. There had been a tidy-up of the site and we continued to hold a couple of out-apiary meetings there. Amanda also reported that over 100lb of honey had been collected from Grassroots and had 2 strong colonies, 1 smaller plus 1 nucleus. For the first time, Amanda has treated the colonies with

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City bees: allotments and gardens can help arrest decline - study

Research also identifies pollinators' favourite flowers, including brambles, buttercups, dandelions, lavender and borage

by Damien Carrington, The Guardian Environment Editor

Allotments, weedy corners and fancy gardens are all urban havens for bees and other pollinators, a study has found.

The widespread decline of bees resulting from the loss of wild areas [and pesticide use](#) has caused great concern in recent years, but towns and cities have been suggested as potential sanctuaries.

The first research to examine all types of land use in cities has identified

pollinators' favourite places and flowers, many of which are often considered weeds. A team of more than 50 people spent two years examining pollinators and plants in Bristol, Edinburgh, Leeds and Reading.

The results enabled them to work out the best ways to support a rich mix of pollinator species that will be resilient to climate change and other challenges. The best strategy is increasing the

number of allotments, the report says. Planting preferred flowers in gardens also helps, as does mowing grass in public parks less frequently, allowing flowers to bloom.

Allotments are particularly good places for pollinators because they provide a mix of fruit and vegetable flowers, plus weedy corners full of native plants. "Allotments are incredibly important at a city level, despite their small area," said Katherine Baldock at the University of Bristol, who led

(Continued on page 4)

Forthcoming winter meetings:

- 20th February @ 7:00pm
- 20th March @ 7:00pm

In next months edition:

- Report on February Meeting
- Amanda Advises
- Asian Hornet Action Team
- Propolis Power-Up

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oxalic acid and reported a huge varroa drop after it's use.

Ian briefly described the new apiary that has been set up in Hove, where we will be holding summer meetings there.

Ian would also be standing down as Swarm Co-Ordinator, with Sue Taylor taking on the role. Ian reported that the first swarms were late being reported then he had 34 call in May, 49 in June and 11 up to 17th July. There were only non-honey bee calls in August. In May, 8 of the collected swarms were passed onto new beekeepers. He did stress that if a member requires a swarm, then they must be ready to house the swarm, i.e. hive and everything else in place, otherwise they would move to the end of the list, so be warned!

The next agenda item was the election of Officers and Committee Members. Heather McNiven was elected unopposed as Chairman and assumed control of the AGM, where she thanked Ian for all his hard work as Chairman over the past couple of years. Following the confirmation of Amanda Millar as President, Heather then thanked Lionel Reuben for his hard work both as President and previously as Newsletter Editor. The remainder of the Officers of the Division and Committee members were then re-elected. Manek Dubash, who had been

seconded to the Committee was formally elected on as Asian Hornet Action Team Co-Ordinator. Gerald Legg has decided to relinquish the Webmaster role, which will be taken over by Pat's son Bradley in the fullness of time. Heather then thanked Gerald for providing the Division with an excellent web site, which as Ian had previously noted, had over 5,000 hits last year.

Under Any Other Business, Pat outlined her involvement with the Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) within the SBKA, which went across all five Divisions as well as discussions with the West Sussex Beekeepers Association and others. Pat has arranged for Bob Hogg from Jersey to speak about the Asian Hornet at a special meeting on 26th March 2019 at the Civic Centre in Uckfield. There is a note of this in Dates for your Diary on the back page, with more details to follow. Jersey has been particularly hard hit with the AH and it is hoped that we on the mainland can learn lessons from Jersey's experiences.

The final item under AOB was by Ian, who gave an update on the honey samples provided by members for research into the anti-microbial properties of local Sussex honey. 22 samples from around the Division were submitted, and whilst the work is ongoing there is evidence that some honies do have anti-microbial properties. One sample was actually

found to increase the microbe count. Ian will forward the full report once published and a review will be presented in this newsletter.

The date for the B&L 2020 AGM will be Wednesday, 15th January 2020 and is subject to confirmation.

This concluded the formalities of the evening.

Amanda demonstrated the timber underfloor insert which has been modified to take the oxalic vapouriser and advised on the safety precautions that must be followed.

Whilst the AGM was in progress the judging of the Honey Show entries was taking place.

This year saw the greatest number of entries into the B&L Honey Show with 78 entries across all show classes, up from 56 last year. For the first time we have now included mead as a class entry and are pleased to have Steve Gibson judging that class. With 55 awards across all classes, that would indicate the quality of the entries. Well done everyone.

Thanks must go to Harold Cloutt, SBKA Treasurer and Hasting & Rother Chairman who gave up his time to judge the entries, ably assisted by Bob Curtis and Philip Else with Steve Gibson judging the mead class.

A full list of winners and entries appears on Page 3.



Heather our new Chairman



Pat delivering the Treasurers report



Ian preparing to open the meeting

B&L 2019 Honey Show Results

Class	Description	1st (5 pts)	2nd (3 pts)	3rd (2 pts)	VHC	HC	C	Total Entries
1	One 1lb Jar Clear honey	Sue Taylor	Katrina Alves de Sousa	Bob Curtis	Bob Curtis	Norman Dickinson		11
2	One 1lb Jar Naturally Crystallised honey	Sue Taylor	Bob Curtis	Bob Curtis	Manek Dubash	Katrina Alves de Sousa		7
3	Two 1lb Jars of similar honey	Norman Dickinson	Sue Taylor	Bob Curtis	Katrina Alves de Sousa	Hilary Osman		8
4	One Rolled candle	Trevor Hollingdale	Sue Taylor	Hilary Osman	Judith New	Hilary Osman	Judith New	6
5	One Moulded candle	Hilary Osman	Sue Taylor	Heather McNiven	Heather McNiven	Hilary Osman	Trevor Hollingdale	9
6	<i>One 1oz block of wax</i>	Sue Taylor	Judith New	Heather McNiven	Trevor Hollingdale	Hilary Osman	Bob Curtis	10
7	One Honey Cake.	Bob Curtis	Manek Dubash	Sue Taylor	Norman Dickinson	Heather McNiven	Hilary Osman	8
8	Six Honey Biscuits.	Bob Curtis	Sue Taylor	Heather McNiven	Heather McNiven	Norman Dickinson	Hilary Osman	8
9	A bee related photograph	Hilary Osman	Sue Taylor	Hilary Osman	Heather McNiven	Ken Isted	Judith New	7
10	A Bottle of Mead	Sue Taylor	Hilary Osman	Judith New	Ben Castle			4

Cups & Highest Scores		Points
Dixon Hurst Cup. 1st Highest Points	Sue Taylor	37
2nd Highest Points	Bob Curtis	17
3rd Highest Points	Hilary Osman	15
Novice Cup	Judith New	
Honey Cake Salver	Bob Curtis	

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the research. "They are a good place for pollinators to hang out and provide a win-win situation, as they are also good for food growing and for people's health."

The research, [published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution](#), found allotments and gardens often had 10 times more bees than parks, cemeteries and urban nature reserves. Baldock said nature reserves were important for other wildlife but were often less suitable for pollinators, being dominated by trees rather than meadows.

The scientists also identified the flowers most visited by bees, hoverflies and other pollinators. Native favourites included brambles, buttercups, dandelions, creeping thistle, common hogweed and ox-eye daisies. "People tend to think of these as weeds, but they are really important for pollinators," said Baldock. She said gardeners had an important role to play in pollinator conservation, with the non-native plants that attracted the most pollinators being lavender, borage, butterfly bushes and common marigolds. Hydrangeas and forget-me-nots were among the least favourite. The researchers found that gardens in more affluent neighbourhoods harboured more pollinators, thanks to there being more flowers and a richer variety of plants.

Stephanie Bird, of the Royal Horticultural Society, said: "This new paper shows that gardens are a hugely important resource for pollinators in

urban areas. We would encourage the UK's 27 million gardeners to pack in a variety of plants, as not all pollinators can access the nectar of each plant, and consider introducing plants to bloom across all seasons." The RHS is

now working with the University of Bristol to find which plants produce the most nectar.

Gardens cover between a quarter and a third of cities, far more than allotments, which cover less than 1%. But increasing the area of allotments gives the biggest boost to pollinators per unit area, the study found.

"It would be great if government made an effort to free up more land for allotments," said Prof Dave Goulson, of the University of Sussex. "Currently there are about 90,000 people on waiting lists to get one. Given that these areas also produce healthy fruit and veg for local, zero-food-miles consumption, and get people out in the open air taking exercise, it would seem that allotments perform vital roles in our cities."

Bee-harming pesticides have been [banned from farm fields across the EU](#) but some are still sold to gardeners. "If we really want to maximise the value of



The research identifies pollinators' favourite places and flowers, many of which are often considered weeds. Photograph: Nadine Mitschunas/University of Bristol

urban areas for wildlife, we would do well to stop using pesticides in our gardens and parks," Goulson said.

Urban pollinators have been less studied than those in rural areas, so the importance of cities and towns to their survival is only now being worked out. The [most comprehensive study to date](#) found little difference in their abundance, perhaps because both are poor habitats, with many rural areas dominated by farmland and cities dominated by concrete and tarmac.

"Perhaps we could come to see our cities as giant nature reserves, places where man and nature can live side by side," said Goulson.

Reproduced from The Guardian, 14th Jan 2019.

Thank you to Domi for sending this in.

Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) by Manek Dubash

Welcome to the first of a series of regular columns concerning the imminent threat to our bees from the Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*), which has been spotted in Dungeness, right on our borders.

You'll no doubt have read about how this insect has no natural predators in the UK, and that *Apis mellifera* (most of our bees) has yet to evolve defensive behaviour which mitigates the Asian hornet's *modus operandi*. The hornets will start emerging from hibernation in the spring, just when our bees start to become active.

There's more about the hornet here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_hornet

My purpose, as the B&L association's new Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) co-ordinator is to introduce myself and to say thank you to those members who came forward to volunteer their help as we brace ourselves for what is likely to be a busy year ahead.

Our main tasks will be to act as eyes on the ground, to spread the message about the hornet by encouraging friends, colleagues and the general public to be vigilant, and to inform the authorities of any Asian hornet nests or activity we become aware of.

I'm in the process of setting up a mailing group and phone contact number to ensure that we stay in touch.

And if you'd like to volunteer, please stay tuned: I'll be able to report more next month about what we plan to do, how it will work, contact details, and the materials we'll have available to support our activity.

Manek Dubash was voted onto the B&L Committee as our Asian Hornet Action Team co-ordinator and will be liaising with similar teams across the South of England. It is important that beekeepers and members of the public are vigilant and report all sightings of the AH, therefore we ask that B&L Members join Manek's team.

His contact details can be found on the back page of this newsletter. Editor

Amanda advises...

Apart from the usual things like making sure the entrance is clear of dead bees, the hives are still intact, dry and not blown over, hefting for stores is very important. If you are unsure it will not hurt the colony to raise the crown board briefly on a mild, low-wind day to check they have stores nearby. Small colonies may not be able to expand the cluster to access more stores resulting in isolation starvation even if they have plenty in the hive, so be prepared to move a frame of stores closer to the cluster if necessary. If worried, you can also put some fondant in a plastic container inverted over the crown board hole over the cluster and check fortnightly that it has not dried out or all been eaten. Dried fondant is easy to recognize, pitted and pocked with holes. See photo. It has been mild up until recently and they will, ironically, have been using more stores than if in a tight quiet cluster as the bees have been more active and probably been raising brood all winter (although I know two of mine were brood-free before Christmas). The large colonies will have eaten more and they are the ones at risk of starvation. Unfortunately, the indications are that we are to have a few weeks of cold wintery weather just as the brood area is beginning to expand. They will benefit from extra insulation now, if not already, on the crownboard.

If you are suffering from bee-withdrawal symptoms over winter then put your inserts under the mesh floor to see what they are doing without disturbing them (see 'Reading the insert' article for interpretation of results) and start preparing for the spring. Make up frames (leaving the wax foundation until nearer the time), get on top of any cleaning not already done and have some clean floors and crownboards ready for the first spring inspection, which could be early March. Decide which colonies did best last year and which to rear queens from this year and brush up on your preferred queen rearing techniques and swarm prevention and control theory.

Last month I explained how I treated for the first time with Oxalic Acid Vapourisation (OAV) at 5 day intervals. I have now finished; most, but not all, have reduced their mites to an acceptable level, but also because the weather is now too cold (it is not recommended below 4 degrees) and the queens will now be increasing their laying and most varroa will be safe in sealed brood cells. Because I did not wish to disturb the bees by removing any sealed brood, and after reading the research thoroughly, I was expecting to do more than one treatment. As I was keen to understand the efficacy and how many mites were present/dropped, I counted every day. I shall not be undertaking such compulsive counting next year I assure you!

Of my 15 colonies only 12 required OAV, the rest had a daily mite drop of less than 1 mite per day. Of these 12, two (2 and 9) had little or no brood and dropped 173 and

643 after the first 5 days; I treated again and they dropped 70 and 69 in a further 5 days. I monitored for a further 5 days and they only dropped 15 and 1 in this time. I am not yet sure how long it will take to reach the background drop but it seems to be about a fortnight. Four colonies (1, 5, 10, S1) I started later, having seen the results on the colonies with the highest pre-treatment drops. These only had time for two or three treatments but they still dropped totals of between 437 and 1025 mites so it should have helped them.

Four colonies required 4 treatments. The worst one dropped over 2700 mites over the 4 treatments. The life cycle of the mites indicates 15 days (ie 3 treatments) should expose all the phoretic mites at some stage and the treatment is supposed to be over 95% effective on phoretic mites. So I should have been seeing a drastic reduction in mites on the fourth treatment rather than the 315-390 I found at the Divisional apiary. This I do not yet understand.

I found most mites were dropped on the first and second days after treatment, perhaps half this in the third and fourth days, and much less on the fifth day. In a third of the colonies, more mites were dropped on the second day, the rest dropped more on the first day. A third of them dropped more mites on their second treatment than their first, but most dropped slightly fewer in their third or fourth treatments, however this is likely to have more to do with when the influx of varroa arrived in October. I suspect it was an invasion lasting several weeks judging from the varroa drop while I was doing icing sugar dusting during that time. A summary of my 'plan' for next year's OAV based on the results of this experiment are as follows. After assessing by daily drop if >1/day, or icing sugar >10 after an hour, I shall OAV. As my mite bombs seem to strike in late October I shall start in mid-late November in case some need 4 treatments. This timing should get the unwanted mites away from the bees as soon as possible to reduce disease risk, also before the weather turns difficult and before the queen increases laying in early January. I will do it above 6° C so the cluster is not too tight and it is less disturbing for them and do it before they

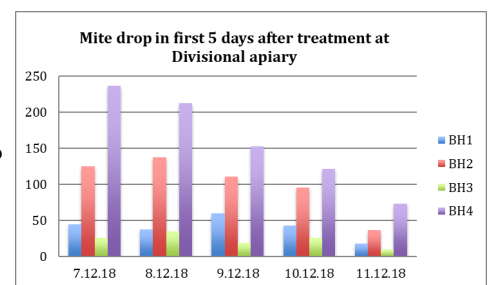
start flying in the morning so the odd flying bees are not blocked out if it is cool. If more than 100 drop after 5 days I shall treat again. A colony with little or no brood will need at most 2 treatments.



I am very pleased with the results so far and any time they are broodless (swarms, artificial swarms etc.) I shall give them an OA Vap and with a bit of luck I will not have to do so much dusting this year! As far as their general health appears after these treatments, they look very good. No dead outside, only a couple of dead bees on a couple of floors, all have been flying when the temperature is above 6 degrees; so looking much better than this time last year

This chart shows the total drop after 5 days from the treatment date indicated (in bold black). The green figures are total mite drops in a further 5 days from the date given, without any treatment. (I allowed myself a break over Christmas from visiting the Divisional apiary!) I was concerned with the continuing high drops mid Jan in a couple of colonies at home when most of the others had reduced to single figures, so while it was mild I dusted three (light black) and did OAV on colony 1, which should have had 4 treatments in a row. Colony 10 should have had another treatment in December but it is too late now.

Chart of mite drop for 4 colonies at the Divisional apiary on each of the first 5 days after treatment. This is typical of the pattern of mite drop on all the 37 treatments I carried out.

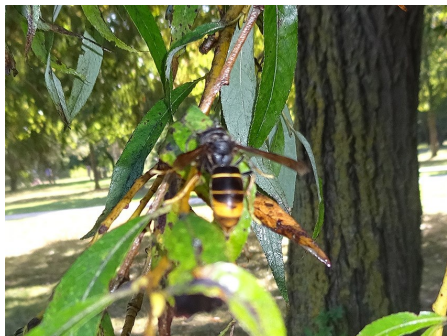


	Colony										
Treatment date	1	2	4	5	8	9	10	BH1	BH2	BH3	BH4
7.12.18								204	507	116	798
12.12.18		643	468		808	73		198	402	219	999
17.12.18	194	69	241	175	200	70		80	258	98	560
22.12.18	465	1	411	331	126	15	472	14	77	9	127
27.12.18	366		190	119	6		202	3	315	7	391
1.1.19	41		30	33	0		25	2	1	1	13
6.1.19	44		28	12			24	3	0	1	3
12.1.19	39		24	23			16	0	0	1	
14.1.19 Dust	51		18				60				
14.1.19 OAV	193										

The Asian Hornet in France

Gerald Legg returned from France at the beginning of October last year and found that Asian Hornets were quite common. He goes on to say "In one park there were hundreds feeding on honeydew on a weeping willow."

"My brother-in-law, the beekeeper and ex. ministry bees' officer, was also in



France and he said how common they were. He also told me of colonies found at Brockenhurst and Winchester and said that they were probably quite becoming widespread and the inevitable day that we will be like France is not far away."



There is plenty on the web about them in France, including this: [Beekeeping with Asian hornets in France - Honey Bee Suite](#) which does not make encouraging reading! Still the French are still producing honey so one can only hope!

B&L membership renewal reminder

Your B&L membership renewal is now overdue and request that all members who have not yet renewed and intend to do so please do so as soon as possible. Remember, you will only receive the latest copy of this newsletter if you are a current member and failure to renew will also mean that you no longer have BDI insurance.

A copy of the membership form has been attached to the newsletter covering email for you to complete and forward to Pat Clowser. Preferred payment is by bank transfer, details on the form, but cheques and PO's are also accepted. Pat's details are on the form and on the back page of this newsletter.

Sussex Beekeepers Association 2020 Annual General Meeting

The Sussex Beekeepers Association 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 2nd March at the Peredur Centre, West Hoathly Road, East Grinstead, RH19 4NF.

Following the formal business of the AGM, Paul Vagg will give a talk titled "Beekeeping and Disability—From Hobbyist Beekeeping to Social Enterprise".

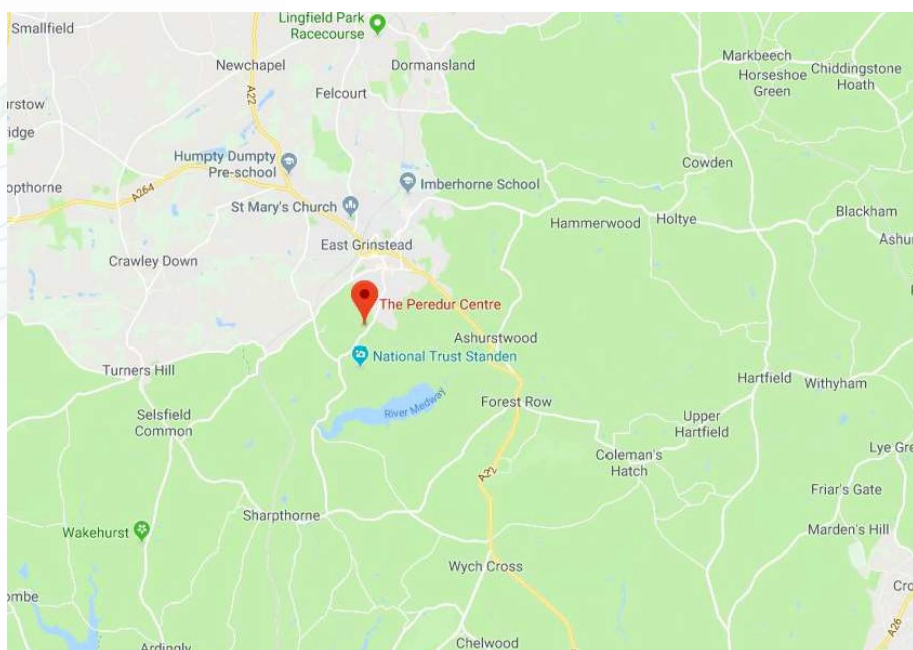
He will talk about his experience of challenging the idea that physical disabilities would prevent him becoming a beekeeper, and his creation of an organisation to help others with physical and learning disabilities access the wonderful world of beekeeping.

Paul is a multi award-winning apiculturist, author and speaker, based in London, and is the Holder of a British Small Business Award 2016 and 2017, and Best London Honey 2016, where he is highly regarded among both his peers and client base.

There will be a number of trade stands on the day, more details yet to follow. There will also be a range of light refreshments available.

Doors will open at 1:30pm for the trade stands with the AGM commencing 2:00pm.

Parking is available on site.



WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Annual Convention Saturday 23rd February 2019

At Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough – 9.30am to 4.30pm

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Association is pleased to invite beekeepers and those interested in bees and beekeeping to the WSBKA Annual Convention. The event is designed to suit beekeepers of all standards. As well as the main lectures, the seminars offer a choice of more specialised topics. We hope you will be joining us.

Main Lectures

The Joys of Raising Queens – Clive de Bruyn

Monitoring Honey Bee Colony Activity with Accelerometer Sensors
– Dr. Martin Bencsik

Melissopalynology - The Study of Pollen in Honey – Adam Leitch

In addition there is a choice of seminars

Seminar 1 (You can attend one of these)

- 1) Beekeeping Mistakes – Clive de Bruyn
- 2) Experiments in Skep Beekeeping – Chris Park
- 3) BBKA Examination System & what you can get out of it – Celia Perry

Seminar 2 (You can attend one of these)

- 4) Asian Hornet Update – Adam Leitch
- 5) Mead, Metheglin & Medicine – Chris Park
- 6) Wings, Stings and other things under the microscope – James Donaldson

For all your beekeeping needs, Paynes Southdown Bee Farms will also be present at the Convention

Advance booking per person, WSBKA members £22
Members of other Associations and non-members £27
On the day if space allows £27

Full details and booking form are on the following pages.

In addition, they are on the WSBKA website www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk
or contact Chris O'Riordan on 01403 253020 or email wsbkaconvention@gmail.com

Photo corner — B&L Honey Show



Photo corner



Amanda demonstrating how she uses the oxalic acid vapouriser

Meet your Committee Members



Amanda Millar: President and Education Co-ordinator



Dominic Zambito: Librarian



Sue Taylor: Swarm Co-ordinator



Manek Dubash: Asian Hornet Action Team Co-ordinator

B&L Divisional Diary 2018 / 2019

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:

~~17th October 2018 — Winter work and 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 - Good record keeping. Speaker: Tom Moore of Wisborough Green BKA

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

Dates for your diary:

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

~~3rd November — SBKA Annual Convention in Uckfield.~~

23rd February: West Sussex Beekeepers Association Annual Convention, Lodge Hill, Pulborough.

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.

Officers of the Division

President: Amanda Millar

Chairman: Heather McNiven
E: chair.blbees@btinternet.com

Vice-Chairman/Treasurer/Membership

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Manek Dubash
T: ??
E: ??

Out-Apiary Managers:
"Grassroots": Amanda Millar
"Knowlands Farm": Heather McNiven
"Hove": Mary King

SBKA County Representative:
Bob Curtis

National Honey Show Representative:
Norman Dickinson

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 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



QR Link to B&L Web Site

