

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers

Newsletter



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Editor: Norman Dickinson

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Some bees can have four parents

Article sent in by Gerald Legg and taken from the NewScientist 8th Dec 2018

We know some honeybees are borne partly male and partly female. Now a closer look has revealed they can have up to four parents - and some of them have no mother at all.

In bees, unfertilised eggs develop into males, or drones, who seek out queens [more exactly gynes as they are not fertile yet – Gerald] to mate with. Fertilised eggs usually become female workers.

However, queens mate with at least 10 males to produce new colony members, and more than

one sperm enters each egg. In a few rare instances a bee can end up with some tissue derived from the fertilised egg, which is female, and some form extra sperm, which is male. The resulting animals are known as gynandromorphs, and have both male and female tissue throughout the body.

Sarah Aamidor and colleagues at the University of Sydney, Australia, studied 11 gynandromorph

honeybees from a single colony to learn more about how these individuals develop. Five had normal worker ovaries, and three had 'queen-like' ovaries. One had normal male reproductive organs, and two had partial male organs.

Genetic tests revealed the unusual family histories of 10 of these bees. Nine had two or three fathers and one mother. One had no mother and two fathers, resulting from the fusion of two sperm.

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National Honey Show – 24th to 26th October 2019

As we approach the time when, hopefully, you will be taking off your honey harvest, now also is the time to think about what you propose entering into the 2019 National Honey Show. There are a wide selection of entry classes to choose from for the many different Products of the Hive and other bee related items.

Obviously, honey is very much at the top of the list and I present some pointers to assist in entering what may very well be an entry worthy of an award.

The quality of the honey for exhibiting will always be dependant on how the honey is extracted, settled

filtered and finally bottled. One useful tip if there are only about 70-80% of the cells fully capped is to put these frames into the extractor and give a gentle spin to remove the uncapped honey, this can then be fed back to the bees and the fully capped frames put aside for later uncapping and extraction.

Uncap all frames and extract as normal ensuring that it is passed through a coarse and fine filter in order to remove bits of wax, bee bits etc. then store in your settling tank(s) of choice. I use stainless steel tanks as a personal preference.

It has been suggested that using an electrically heated uncapping knife can give a slightly caramelised flavour to the honey by virtue of the hot blade coming into contact with the honey.

Before I bottle the honey I always store the settling tank in a warming cabinet set to 29°C as this helps to disperse any air entrained in the honey.

Prior to bottling, and if you intend to show your honey, then be very careful when selecting your jars and lids. Try to ensure that all jars are from the same supplier and have the same

(Continued on page 2)

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

We're now approaching max Asian hornet potential. And one has already been spotted: there has been a confirmed sighting in New Milton, Hampshire. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-identified-in-south-hampshire>)

Over the next few weeks, any Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina*) that have over-wintered here it arrived since then will be out scouting for fresh meat. And they'll be looking for our bees in particular.

There's a fair degree of awareness among the general public it would seem, prompted by rolling media stories of so-called killer hornets and all too often accompanied by pictures of the European hornet (*V. crabro*) – which doesn't help with identification. I watch the same story get repeated and subtly altered each time as it cascades down the media food chain – much like Chinese whispers.

For example, the government's official advice is that *V. velutina* poses no greater risk to human

health than a bee. And some of the more responsible media reported killer hornets in headlines, adding that the stings are only likely to be deadly if are allergic, or if you disturb a whole nestful of them. But that caveat got lost as the story was copied and pasted, leaving just the killer hornet angle.

So it's our job to fight the tide of falsehood and half-truths. To that end, I have bought a bunch of small cards (see picture) to help us help the public to identify the hornet positively. I'll be bringing them along to meetings, so please approach me if I haven't handed you a small bundle already!

Eyes open!



PS: If you want to see the beasts in action, check out Jersey beekeeper Bob Hogge's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Robert%20Hogge>

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markings. The lids should be checked for dents, scratches and colour differences and discard those that do not match. Keep all animals out of the bottling area and very slowly fill the jars to avoid air entrapment.

All exhibits must not display any label other than the ones sent by the Entries Secretary. Make up a small paper template to ensure that the labels are correctly positioned on the container, and if multiple containers are required for a class, ensure that the labels are identical on each. Presentation of the exhibit is just as important as the quality of the exhibit itself, and if your exhibit is identical with regards to taste, aroma etc. to others, but your presentation is better, then you stand a chance of an award.

When you transport your honey to the show, keep it well protected so as not to scratch the lids or damage the jars.

Even if you do not have any honey that you consider to be good enough to win, it is always worth entering it into Class 5 or Class 6, as all exhibits will receive judges comments. You may very well be surprised that it is not as bad as you had thought.

Other classes to consider apart from the multitude of honey classes include exhibits of bees wax, moulded or otherwise, mead and honey beer, although the mead would have needed to be started some time ago to enable it to mature, design classes, photography, microscopy, video and essay classes, confectionary classes including cakes, biscuits and honey sweets / chocolate, honey marmalade and honey vinegar. All together there are over 300 different classes so there should be one to suit you.

Even if you do not intend to enter any exhibits then there is more than enough to see as a visitor. There is a full programme of lectures spread out over the three days suitable for all levels of

beekeeping skills. The lecture programme is available on line at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lectures-and-workshops.php>. The workshop programme will be available on line from 1st September and you will need to book early to avoid disappointment.

As the newly appointed National Honey Show Membership Secretary, it would be remiss of me not to mention either renewing your membership or if not a member, then consider joining. At £20 (£19 if not requiring the Schedule to be sent) this is excellent value for money and gives entry for all 3 days. You must also be a member to enter some of the classes. All information is available at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/membership.php> or contact me, my details are on the back page of the newsletter.

Look forward to seeing you at the Show in October.

Norman Dickinson

Amanda advises...

As last year, I shall be taking my honey off just before the end of July this year as the nectar flow seems to have slowed considerably (there are already blackberry fruit on the bushes), and there seems to have been no progress in the supers for a week or so. The season has been early again. Any nectar still coming in the bees can have; not that mine have a huge amount anyway. Sadly, in spite of the bee-lovely weather many of my colonies are small or had extended brood breaks waiting for virgins to mate in the poor weather earlier in the year so have been slower to build up than normal. Make sure you leave space for the bees to cluster in, before removing all the supers. If some of the honey is not yet capped, before extracting high moisture honey, leave for a couple of days in the supers, on end so air can circulate, in a small room with a dehumidifier. It can reduce the moisture by at least 1%. There has been some research indicating that up to 40% of the brood in late August may be winter bees in colonies with their original queen, this proportion of the emerging bees increases until early October. These bees need to survive until late March next year. If the colony had had a new queen, (mated, virgin or emergency) the winter bee production was found to have shifted 12 days later, ie early September to late October. It means that if we wish for strong colonies with healthy winter bees to survive until the spring, it is essential we monitor and if necessary start treating against varroa at the beginning of August, as many treatments take one or two brood cycles to knock the mite numbers down. I find it easy to monitor in late July by putting the insert in for 5-7 days so that I know exactly which colonies require treatment as soon as I have removed the honey and had them lick the supers dry. I put the wet supers back on over an open crownboard for a couple of days, to get them to remove any residual honey down into the colony, then store them for winter. If you use a Porter escape in a crown board just leave it in place and remove the Porter escapes. However, before you

remove the honey supers you need to decide how much honey you wish to leave them to winter on; I try for 50% honey and the rest topped up with sugar syrup. This also means they have enough for any mite treatment in August as I do not normally disturb them with that on and it is definitely not a good idea to feed them at the same time.

Last year several of my colonies were so low in mites, because I keep the mites low in spring and summer, that I was able to delay any treatment until November when I am regularly hit by a varroa bomb from neglected/untreated colonies collapsing near me and being robbed out by my bees. The Oxalic Acid Vapourisation I carried out last November seems to have been very effective and kept the mites low all year and going by the first 4 colonies I monitored last week before the heatwave, I shall be doing the same this year with most of them. Currently it is too hot to have any inserts in and I shall be shading the colonies in the sun; all have an empty super over the crownboard to isolate them from the boiling hot metal roofs. It can be quite hot in August which may also limit the treatments we can use, ie the thymol based ones, so read the instructions. If used when the temperature is too hot it can put the queen off lay which may have a serious effect on winter bee production. Some years I find I have to start the treatment using icing sugar until it is cool enough to use Apiguard, rather than delay treatment.

If you collected a swarm or your colony swarmed, queen replacement/supersedure is something to look out for. So if you only see a couple of queen cells sometimes in the middle of a frame, do not disturb them but let them get on with replacing the queen. It may be the queen being replaced is a young one but the swarming has triggered the replacement.

If you have time between honey extracting and varroa monitoring while we have this hot dry weather it is an opportune moment to paint hive stands. The weather can turn in September and then I wish I had done it earlier.

Utrecht in Holland has been covering their bus stop roofs with bee friendly sedum. My workshop roof had moss on



when it was under a tree but when the tree died the debris was colonised naturally with sedum. This year I see it is white sedum, previously I have had yellow, it would be nice to get some yellow back; it would probably extend the season. *See photo in Photo Corner Ed.*

Other research: Virus spillover from commercial honeybees to bumblebees has been found in US; 19% of flowers had DWV or BQCVirus. No virus found on bumblebees collect more than 1km from apiaries. I wondered whether it was transferred by their feet, until I found some bee poo on one of my flowers. See photo of beepoo on Sweet Rocket. *See photo in Photo Corner Ed* Careful monitoring and treatment or culling of diseased colonies could protect wild bees from viruses and other pathogens. There are implications for all the so-called 'treatment-free' Beekeepers, and behoves new (and experienced) beekeepers to monitor more carefully, recognise diseases and treat accordingly. It comes as no great surprise that other research finds organic farming enhances honeybee colony performance with 37% more brood, 20% more adult bees and 53% more honey. They suggest the main reasons are a wider range of pollen resources especially in May and June, and reduced mortality from pesticides. Following the reported decline in bees and other insects in Europe (and recently Russia too) a petition was started last month, which, if it reaches 1 million signatures from 7 EU member states they will consider legislating on conservation issues, pesticide and fertiliser restrictions. This can be found at <https://wesavebees.eu> website. The text in English can be seen at [Europa.eu/rapid/press-release IP-19-2472 en.htm](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release-IP-19-2472-en.htm) I hope you had a good crop.

Swarm of bees locks down part of Palace Pier during heatwave

Brighton Argus, 25th July 2019. Pictures by Simon Dack

A CORDON was put up on the Palace Pier after the arrival of a large swarm of bees. During the heatwave on Thursday, 25th July.

Thousands of people had flocked to Brighton on Thursday to enjoy the sunshine.

And the warm weather means that masses of the insects are currently swarming on the Pier.

Many tourists were shocked by the huge numbers of bees buzzing on the ceiling but others stopped to take photos of the swarm.

If you see a swarm of bees it can be quite alarming, but it is the process of bees looking for a new home.

The British Beekeepers Association advise that the bee colony's priority is "to find a safe place to set up their new colony" and won't be interested in you. However they warn that you "should still act with caution as they are a wild insect."

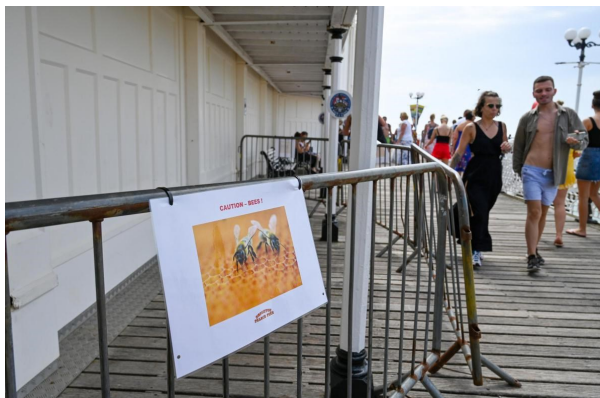


Photo Corner



Amanda sent these three photos in. Top left: bee on cat mint, Top right: bee poo on Sweet Rocket, method of disease transmission, Right :Sedum roof on Amanda's shed. There is more information in the Amanda advises... article.



Left: Living in wall of barn near to Tony, who spoke to the owner. Apparently there have been bees here for 20 years . They beard on hot days and the entrance is just visible the at bottom of beard.

Sent in by Tony Robinson

Hove out apiary meeting

It was a pleasant afternoon opening three hives and discussing the findings - sadly one colony was deemed not viable and Ian will cull it this coming week. The gazebo was erected at the entrance of the bee shed and the hives are situated beyond the dark shed in the background.

Thanks to Ian for running the meeting and to Shirley for providing tea and cake, which gave us the opportunity to natter about bees.

Sent in by Mary King



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 2:0pm and are subject to weather permitting. Location maps are on the website in the member's section.

Summer programme:

~~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:

~~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.

Officers of the Division

President: Amanda Millar

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

Vice-Chairman/Treasurer/Membership
Secretary: Pat Clowser
5 Wivelsfield Road, Saltdean, BN2 8FP
T: 01273 700404
E: patricia.blbees@hotmail.com

Hon Secretary: Hilary Osman
Holly Tree Cottage, Norlington Lane,
Ringmer, BN8 5SH
T: 01273 813045
E: secretary@brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Meetings Secretary: Mary King

Swarm Coordinator: Sue Taylor
M: 07999 987097

Webmaster: Gerald Legg
E: gerald@chelifer.com

Newsletter Editor: Norman Dickinson
34 Abergavenny Road, Lewes, BN7 1SN
M: 07792 296422
E: editor.blbees@outlook.com

Librarian: Dominic Zambito
E: librarian.blbees@outlook.com

Education Co-ordinator: Amanda Millar
E: amanda.millar.rf3@btinternet.com

Asian Hornet Action Team Co-ordinator:
Manek Dubash
T: 07762 312592
E: blbka.ahat@gmail.com

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

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 Website



The co-operative membership
Community Fund

