

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers

Newsletter



Volume 9 – September 2019

Editor: Norman Dickinson

BRIGHTON AND LEWES DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

www.brightonlewesbeekeepers.co.uk

Rottingdean Fair 2019

Report by Norman Dickinson

The annual Rottingdean Fair was held on Saturday, 3rd August and once again Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers were invited to set-up a display. The weather was again very kind to us and we sold lots of honey and other Products of the Hive to members of the public. As is normal at these events, the demonstration hive always attracts a huge amount of interest, especially with the children and thanks must go to Bob Curtis and Judith New who manned the observation hive for most of the day.

We were fortunate to have the “giant bee suit” gallantly worn by both

Bob and Dominic Zambito. I say gallantly because the day was very hot and walking around in the suit made both even hotter. A large amount of interest was shown with both adults and children lining up to have their photos taken with the “bee”. It is probably because of the suit that Brighton and Lewes were awarded the best display in the whole Fair, but that should not detract from the huge amount of effort put in by all B&L members manning the stand which would have contributed to B&L winning the award.

One small surprise we had was from a mother who attended last year’s

Fair and was heavily pregnant, but refused to leave to give birth until she had purchased some honey from us at about 12:30am. At 5pm the mother, Lindsay gave birth to a baby girl who she named Pearl. The parents with baby Pearl, now just one year old, visited the stand to purchase more honey, but this time they did not have to rush off, and to all we send our most sincere congratulations, both for the safe arrival of their new daughter 12 months ago and the celebration of Pearl’s first birthday.

A series of photos of the event can be found on Page 2

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Asian Hornet Action Team Report by Manek Dubash

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) probably had a good summer too, and now is when we are likely to start spotting them hovering and hawking in front of our hives – and stealing our bees. As reported last month, one has already been identified in New Milton, Hampshire, so we need to stay vigilant – especially since we are less likely to visit the hives over the next month or so as inspection frequency tails off.

Fighting Back

But rather than be the conveyor of doom and gloom (I’m writing this

during in the late August heatwave), I can report that inroads are being made in the fightback against these exotic invaders. Specifically, an academic team in Spain, composed of Dr. Xesús Feás, Dr. Prof. Pilar Vázquez-Tato and Dr. Prof. Julio Seijas at the University of Santiago de Compostela, has synthesised the sexual pheromones of *V. velutina*.

What does this mean? Pheromones are messenger chemicals that attract the opposite sex for mating, and they are highly efficient, non-toxic, and specific to each

species. Because they are attractants, they can be used to monitor, trap and disrupt mating.

So artificial pheromones can be released from dispensers or lures that act as false sources, or the pheromone is released at such a high rate that the male is disoriented or unable to detect the plume of the calling female. Lures need to be used at the reproductive phase of the colony, just before first sexual individuals appears. In late summer, the queen starts to produce reproductive females and males.

Forthcoming winter meetings:

- Winter meetings commence 16th October 2019

Forthcoming summer out-apiary meetings:

- See rear panel

In next months edition:

- Amanda Advises
- Asian Hornet Action Team
- Contributions from our members

Rottingdean Fair Photos by Bob Curtis & Norman Dickinson



Mother Lindsay with baby Pearl at one year old



Amanda advises...

The main jobs for September are giving the colonies a thorough check of each frame for health and disease, whether queenright, assessing the stores they have and topping up with strongest sugar syrup you can make, as soon as possible. Only give them what they need otherwise they will fill the area which is required to produce the all-important winter bee brood, also surplus could get into next year's honey crop and it's a waste of money and effort. Depending on their size, nucs will need between 25-35lbs total, up to large colony filling the equivalent of a double brood, which will need a total of nearly 50lbs. Most of mine already have some honey so I will not need to feed this total thank goodness. Other things to think about are insulation, wasp traps if they are a nuisance, and towards the end of the month; mouse guards. Queen excluders should be removed if not already taken off with the honey supers.

This year I seem to be up-to-date with bee chores; most unusually. This is mainly because I did not have a lot of honey to remove as I only had four production colonies (due to queen loss last winter and culling because of Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus). The survivors of CBPV had depleted populations and did not collect as much as they could have. I am pleased to say they have recently shown no further signs of the virus and seem to have lots of brood. I hope they have worked it out of their system and with old brood removed hope I do not have a repeat next year. I have been unable to find much information about durability etc of the virus but it is passed by contact with infected bees and faeces. I made up my losses by rearing quite a few nucs and collected swarms. So now I have lots of colonies again. These not-so-small nucs are relatively trouble free, no honey to worry about, good tempered, low mites because most had brood breaks so apart from a few dusting sessions with

icing sugar for a couple of them, all I have to do now is feed them.

I have given them two feeds already (a small rapid feeder of 2:1 sugar syrup equates to 5lb of stores). I have also given them all their full health check for brood quality and any disease (none thankfully), quantity of stores so I know exactly how much they need to be fed, and state of comb so I know which need new comb in the spring. This will be the last invasive inspection before the winter, I will just check now and again for presence of eggs (ie queenright) and leave them to it. However, I am expecting a mite invasion and will have to do Oxalic Acid Vapourisation late November. Most of the nucs and all the swarms started with clean comb so only a couple will need new comb in the spring, and with a bit of luck those will have moved up into the boxes with stores so I can just remove the empty bottom box (I run all mine on the same sized shallow boxes so can do this easily). One mature colony I put Apiguard on a week ago as it dropped 50 mites after dusting and has dropped 1300 mites in that time but it was tailing off and yesterday I removed the empty tray and insert because of the heatwave we are expecting this bank holiday weekend. I shall have to wait until it is below 25 degrees before considering if they need another tray, but I can use icing sugar in the meantime. The only other colony showing serious mite drop was one which dropped 500 in 5 days of natural drop - horrors! A dust next day produced ~ 200 and then the numbers dropped right off before I had made up my mind between Oxalic acid vapourisation and Apiguard based on the prevailing temperature. At first I was afraid they had become queenless or broodless and all the mites were phoretic at that time but on inspection they have at least three shallows full of brood so I am at a loss to the

cause of this mite blip. It is too early for my regular invasion in late October and none of the other colonies had it.



I was surprised that all three swarms I collected are a bit grumpy, I have heard the suggestion it may be because there are so many hybrid Buckfast queens being bought (by beginners who lose their swarms...?); the second generation open mated queens tend to produce bad tempered colonies. Another good reason to use locally reared queens.

This last few weeks, (apart from that wet week in August) some butterflies and lots of lovely hoverflies have been around, particularly on my wild scabious. I have had three species of Volucella; V. Inanis, the Hornet Hoverfly (V. zonaria) Britain's largest, and the Great Pied Hoverfly (V. pellucens) the superficial resemblance to the European Hornet should not give cause for concern; they are completely harmless and very beautiful.

I started a Prairie bed in the spring with Autumn flowering Rudbeckia, Echinops and Echinacea. The young plants have a few flowers on now and are very popular with honey and solitary bees. Now is the time to plant spring specie crocus corms and allium bulbs and plan your bee-garden for next year.

In the News: recently there have been reports of mass bee deaths in Brazil, Russia, and elsewhere. There is little doubt that pesticides are at the root of it. *Tony Robinson has sent in an article covering this and can be found on Page 4 of this newsletter. Ed.*

Why 500 million bees have died in Brazil in three months

BBC Newsbeat 20th August 2019. Pictures by GETTY IMAGES. Article sent in by Tony Robinson

In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, 400 million dead bees were found - with beekeepers in four states reporting the mass deaths.

Researchers have blamed the use of pesticides - chemical substances which are used to kill pests. Bees have a really important role in the food chain - with around one-third of the food we eat relying on pollination mainly by bees. These include fruits and vegetables such as avocados, broccoli and cherries.

What's happened to the Brazilian bees?

The main cause of death for these bees has been the use of pesticides containing products that are banned in Europe, such as neonicotinoids and fipronil. The EU imposed an almost total ban on neonicotinoids last April because of the serious harm it could cause to bees.

What's the story globally?

Things aren't looking good for bees around the world. In the United States, beekeepers lost four in 10 of their honeybee colonies in the past year,

making it the worst winter on record.

In Russia 20 regions reported mass bee deaths, with officials also warning it could mean 20% less honey being produced.



Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been criticised for environmental policies like lifting restriction's on pesticides

It adds that with greater urbanisation happening, more urban green spaces should be developed to protect bees.

Some researchers say wildlife-friendly farming and gardening - such as creating patches of wild plants and weeds to encourage pollinating insects - can have a positive impact.

Your garden can help too as growing plants encourages bees to pollinate - and leaving the grass to grow longer also gives bees more shelter. For tired bees, wildlife charity Buglife says people should put them onto flowers, where they may be able to find nectar which contains nutrients they need - but sugar water can be more controversial.

You can also create a bee bath - which is filling a small dish with water and stones - that will let bees land on the stone to drink water. And many environmental groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth say banning harmful pesticides is vital to stopping bees from dying.



Pesticides are sprayed in agriculture around the world and can harm insects such as bees

But in the same year Brazil lifted restrictions on pesticides - despite opposition from environmentalists who called it the "poison package". The use of pesticides in Brazil has increased, according to Greenpeace, with 193 products containing chemicals banned in the EU being registered in Brazil in the last three years.

The country uses pesticides because its economy is so reliant on agriculture.

At least one million bees died in South Africa in November 2018, with fipronil being blamed.

And countries such as Canada, Mexico, Argentina and Turkey have all also reported mass die-offs of bees in the last 18 months.

How can bees be helped?

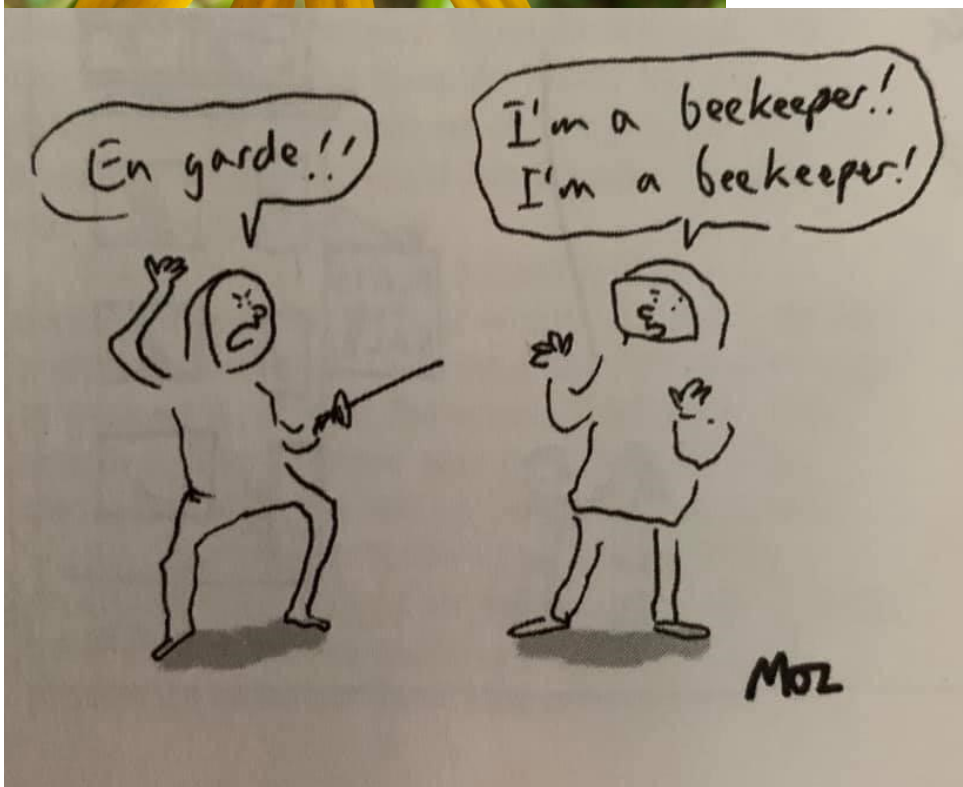
The World Wildlife Foundation says unused land that was previously used for development should be managed to better safeguard bee populations.



Photo Corner



*Amanda sent these three photos in. Top left: The Large Pied Hoverfly, *Volucella pellucens*, lays eggs in wasp nests , Top right: The Hornet Hoverfly, *Volucella zonaria*, which lays its eggs in wasp and hornets nests , Left: Solitary bee on *Rudbeckia*. There is more information on the Hoverfly's in the Amanda advises... article.*



Cartoon sent in by Tony Robinson

If you need to think about it, don't. Ed

B&L Divisional Diary 2019 / 2020

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.

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:

15th October 2019—subject to be advised.

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National Honey Show Representative:
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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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QR Link to B&L Website



The co-operative membership
Community Fund

