

Brighton & Lewes Bees

A DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

NEW WINTER MEETING CALENDAR
And a new meeting venue
See back page for details



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EDITORIAL



End of season forager at work at Prairie Gardens, Henfield. Photo: Manek Dubash

So, here we are at the blunt end of the season, honey harvest mostly gathered (surely?), and just parasite treatments and winter feeding to consider. Oh yes, and what to do with all the suddenly redundant equipment: cleaning, freezing to kill off the dreaded wax moth, storing safely... It ain't over yet!

But for the poor worn-out forager above, the end is clearly nigh, indicated by her frayed wingtips.

Meetings

For us though, thanks to our interest in these fascinating creatures, activity continues. As well as the necessary tasks outlined above, we have a series of meetings lined up in a new venue: the

Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes, next to the bus station.

The Bee Chats will continue: a great way of spending a happy evening in a pub chatting about things bee-related with like-minded folk. See [the back pages](#) for the details of these and other events.

Rottingdean Fair

It was a terrific day on Saturday 6 August: the annual fair is back and B&L was there in force to sell honey and hive products—mostly, it has to be said, those of the indefatigable Hilary Osman whose range of wraps, candles, jams, marmalades and of course honeys had to be seen to be believed.

As well as being a great day weather-wise, there was a huge amount of goodwill from the public. It also helped us shore up our finances—which in turn helps to keep a lid on fees, which in a time of high inflation is very welcome.

Education opportunities

We can never stop learning: keeps the brain active! So no apologies about repeating the information about B&L's education programme, led by Training Co-ordinator Jude New. In particular, consider taking the Bee Husbandry course (BBKA Module 1); you'll become a better beekeeper. For more information about this and other courses, [contact Jude](#).

Manek Dubash, Editor

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2022

EVENTS

- Meetings and more
- See [back page](#) for details

NEXT MONTH

- Tips for autumn
- Your contributions
- News updates
- New events
- Asian hornet update

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS AND STORIES

Do you have interesting photos or video links you'd like to share? Or an insight from your beekeeping that would could enhance the hobby for others? Do you have skills that could be useful to other members? Anything else you'd like to see in this newsletter?

Ideas and contributions welcome; all contact details are on the [back page](#).

ONLINE

 [B&L website](#)
 [Facebook](#)



QR link to our website

Seasonal tips for September: end of the season

Now you've taken the honey off—and I hope you had as good a harvest as I did this year—now is the time to thoroughly check the brood for disease and mite levels in your hives. Only treat your bees if they need it. Use the [National Bee Unit Guide on Managing Varroa](#) and go to the chapter on Integrated Pest Management for advice. If your daily average mite drop is above 10, then you need to treat immediately. [Several treatments](#) are available to us, but some need to be applied before the temperature drops too far.

As you can see from the picture below, this colony was a bit upset when I put Apiguard on last week.

You will also want to protect the stores, so it's a good idea to reduce the hive entrance size to help the bees guard against wasps and other bees robbing, especially for a smaller colony.

Winter feeding

So what constitutes a small colony? It's been suggested that anything with fewer than five frames of bees is in danger of failing during the winter.

There could be a number of reasons for this, but the primary one is that there isn't enough mass in the cluster to protect against heat loss unless you take extra precautions to conserve heat inside the hive.

There are many solutions to protecting bees in colder environments, one being to unite them with or into larger colonies using the newspaper method.

Your records will show you which colony to choose and which queen to cull (yes, a bit of regicide, but sometimes bee husbandry calls for it). The resulting colony will have a better

chance of survival, a better developed queen and more stores to see them through the winter.

How and how much to feed

When the last of the ivy has flowered there will be little chance for your bees to collect more forage for the winter and they will have to rely on their stores for five to seven months. Lower temperatures also limit the ability of the cluster to move to new stores. So having stores readily available, close to the cluster is essential.

You will need anywhere between 18-27kg of stores, depending on the location of your bees and the external temperature. A National super frame holds about 2.5kg of stores.

Counter-intuitively, the warmer it is, the more food the bees will need to survive the winter. This is because the cluster will be looser, and the bees will be able to move to new areas of stores within the hive easily.

If you think there will not be enough stores for the winter, either because they've eaten it already or you've taken it all, you will need to feed additional 2:1 thick syrup (1kg of sugar to 630ml of water to be precise) or commercial invert syrup to make up the shortfall.

How much is enough? In my opinion, keep feeding them until they stop taking it down. However, if you want to be a little more measured and you're making it yourself, then 1kg of sugar will make 1.25kg of stored syrup once the bees have processed it. So, if you think the shortfall is 10kg then divide 10kg by 1.25kg to give you the resulting 8kg of sugar you will need to make your syrup ($10/1.25=8$). Be sure if you are making the syrup to make enough; the bees can empty a 10-litre feeder in a couple of days. At the end of the process and, as a rule of thumb, the hive will feel like it is fixed to the ground if you try and lift it.

Feeder types

You can use a contact feeder where the lid bucket has a fine mesh outlet. When full and the lid is in place, the bucket is inverted over one of the holes in the crown board. An eke is put over the

inverted bucket and the hive cover replaced. Or you can use a rapid feeder, usually 75-100mm deep open trays with an entrance at the bottom (below). These may require an eke or if they are big enough, can act as the crown board and the hive lid placed directly on top of them.

There are no practical differences between them: the important thing is to add all the winter feed in one go. [Dave Cushman's website](#) has more details.

When feeding, and to avoid any unnecessary excitement, try not to spill any syrup; make sure your feeder is bee/wasp proof from the outside and try to feed later on in the day when there is little foraging activity.

Nadiring your supers

If you have left your bees a super of their own honey for the winter, the next question is whether to leave it above or below the brood. I favour the latter option, known as nadiring. Remove the queen excluder beforehand.

My reasons for nadiring are that bees always move upwards where it's warmer. So, as the brood nest shrinks there will be space for the bees to store honey in the brood comb and towards the top of the frames. As the weather gets colder, the bees will move up into the region filled with stores.

Remove the super very early in the spring, or the super will end up with brood in it as the brood area expands.

Enjoy your harvest and think about entering the National Honey Show—[contact Norman](#) for details; you'll be surprised at what you can do with honey and other hive products.

The Veiled Beekeeper



English rapid feeder



Apiguard reaction. Photo: Ian White



Graham Bubloz
Chairman

Words from the Chair

We need help!

I wonder whether you might consider helping us on the committee? We really do need a secretary to help keep us to run smoothly. Of late, sometimes things are nearly missed – and if we had someone who's reasonably organised, they could really save the day. Please let me know if you could be that person?

I've heard encouraging news that most of us have had a bumper crop of honey this year. If you have, please get in touch with [Manek Dubash](#) and tell the story—was it the best year ever?—and how did it compare to previous ones?

Healthy hives

No doubt, you're considering hive health, especially at this time in preparation for winter. I recall from the Bee Disease Day that we held in May this year, that varroa management is considered vital to maintain

your colony. I am trying to keep on top of it myself.

However, if you're unsure or if you have any questions regarding preparation for winter, you could perhaps attend our last out-apiary meeting at Hove on 4 September—but you must pre-book with me because of limited numbers at the apiary.

Or indeed come along to our first indoor meeting, which is being held at the new venue at Lewes (Eastgate Baptiste Church Hall,) right opposite Waitrose on Wednesday 14 September from 7.15pm. We will be holding a "Question Time" type of event: a few resident experts will be on the stage, available to try and answer your bee-related queries.

For those that have a spare afternoon, perhaps consider coming along to attend the Westdene Fair (North Brighton) held on Sunday 11th September on the village green from 12pm onwards.



Manek Dubash
Asian Hornet
Team Co-ordinator

Asian hornet latest



Will they arrive here?

They're here already: there's been a confirmed sighting of an Asian hornet near Chelmsford, the second of the year, just a few days before we went to press. Keep an eye on the [BBKA](#) and [NBU](#) websites for updates.

And be ready to find them at some point near your hives. With the warmer weather we're now experiencing, fewer queens will die over the winter, and circumstances for nest-building in the spring will be much more favourable. It's also when they're at their most vulnerable...

Some have suggested that the southern extent of the UK mainland marked the northern limit of these creatures, which evolved in warm Asian climes.

However, here's the Met Office's [weather report](#) for February 2022: "The provisional UK mean temperature was 5.6 °C, which is 1.5°C above the 1991-2020 long-term average, making it the seventh mildest February in a series from 1884. The far north of the UK was close to average, whereas southern areas were around two degrees above average for the month; frosts were fewer than average in almost all areas."

And on Jersey, AH co-ordinator Alistair Christie and his team have now identified and destroyed 106 nests at the time of writing—and the pace of discovery seems to show no signs of slowing.

Jersey, just 119.6 sq. km (46.2 sq. miles in old money), appears to have been overrun.

I believe the number of nests discovered by the AH team's volunteers approaches 10 times higher than that of 2021.

This is truly scary.

Rottingdean Fair, 6 August 2022



A warm sunny day in August marked our return to Rottingdean. The punters queued from the start, largely wanting local honey—though the closest we could offer was honey from either Brighton or Lewes. Honeys from all stall members were on sale plus Hilary's amazing array of hive products. We also offered an observation hive and Bob's microscope, through which people could see what a bee looks like in deep close-up.

On the stall were (L-R, bottom pic): Manek Dubash, Bob Curtis, Hilary Osman, Ian White and Norman Dickinson; Felicity Alder came to help after this pic was taken.

B&L members who came to say hello included Nigel Kermode, Paul Terry, Mim, and Chris Hogarth (sorry if I missed anyone).

And B&L took over £1,000 on the day: quite a result! If they'll have us, we'll be back...

Photos by Bob Curtis (except the one he's in—bottom).



From our apiaries

Barcombe



One of the Barcombe hives earlier in the year. Photo: Tony Birkbeck

Looking after bees this month has been a bit of a challenge following my knee replacement surgery at the end of July, however I have surprised myself how mobile I've been and how good the recovery has progressed.

I've managed, with lots of help from Mrs Toni, to remove all supers and push the bees down into their brood boxes. Interestingly we did this while the flow wasn't quite finished which hopefully has meant the bees have managed to fill the brood boxes up with the last remaining nectar and I won't need to feed as vigorously as I did last year.

A quick inspection of each hive has reassuringly confirmed that at least four of the seven hives have good stores at this stage so I'm only feeding three of them now.

Hive number 2 is my concern at the moment as it has very patchy brood, I'll be keeping an eye on this and making an assessment when I do a full disease inspection in September.

All hives now have their varroa treatment in place and will last for the next six weeks, once that's done I will be doing a final inspection and then

wrapping the hives in roofing membrane ready for the winter.

Meanwhile the pile of equipment that needs cleaning, supers that need freezing, old comb that needs melting down etc is growing. I have noticed that some supers that are queuing for their space in the freezer already have quite a lot of waxworm so make sure you get these processed as a priority before it's too late.

See you all at the winter meetings.

Tony Birkbeck, Apiary Manager

Grassroots

The hives have had an infestation of wax moth and a couple of weaker colonies were being robbed by a stronger colony.

When the hive is opened either a white line across the frame or web is in evidence. The hives at Grassroots had become queenless and stubbornly refused to make new queens from frames of uncapped brood.

Useful wax moths

We must remember that wax moths perform a very useful function in wild nests, especially in tree cavities where there is a lot of waste material such as cappings that fall to the bottom. Wax moths, being scavengers, feed on this and help bees keep it at manageable levels.

In managed colonies, beekeepers like to keep their hives clean, leaving nothing for the wax moth to feed on, so they have no alternative but to attack



combs. If a colony dies out, possibly from disease, wax moth moves in and destroys everything, leaving a clean cavity for another swarm to move into.

Cleaning up

I removed the frames; normally I would burn them, but the dry weather meant that this was not an option. I have put the boxes with wax moth in an open space in my garden with 80% acetic acid fumes to kill it off, when possible, I will destroy the wax or render it for other uses later in the season.

The hive parts which have been removed from Grassroots will be scraped, scorched and soaked in 1:10 household bleach to make them clean for use next season. The poly hives will be cleaned with Mr Muscle to remove the wax and propolis and then bleached for use next season. It's a lengthy business and not to be tackled (as long as there is no immediate risk of spreading infection) until the weather cools.

Jude New, Apiary Manager

Hove

The bees at Hove have been bothered by wasps which are probably interested in the fruit in the garden: plums and apples. I have put wasp traps in the trees and closed up the entrances.

The first capped supers were removed from Hove at the end of July (see photo on next page by Graham Bubloz). I was Covid-free so Graham and I could work together to remove the heavy supers for me to extract. It took both our small cars to remove them.

On inspection, some of the frames were dripping so they were returned to the hives. It was noticeable that some of the honey was capped and pale in colour, possibly the earlier nectar collection from the top fruits, plum,

From our apiaries

Hove (continued)



Super overload. Photos: Graham B.

cherry, apple and apricot which grow in the gardens at Hove and in the allotments next door. There was also some dark thick honey maybe later nectar collected from chestnut.

The extracted frames have been returned to the hives that they came from. They were placed over a crown board to encourage the bees to rob them out and to move remaining honey into the brood box or the supers still to be capped.

Dry frames were taken to the shed for storage until next season. Frames used only for stores are not usually of interest to wax moth so I don't treat them over winter.

However, this year there has been evidence of wax moth in both apiaries so I will check supers with a view to fumigating them with 80% acetic acid later. There are still a couple of supers at Hove which are to be capped. On inspection this week the decision will be made whether to remove all supers and start Apiguard treatment or to wait for the bees to cap the remaining



Peaceful at Hove apiary. Photo: Graham B.

honey; I think that supers and queen excluders will be removed and treatments will start soon.

I announced on Facebook that there were 72 jars of honey from Hove for Rottingdean Fair. It was popular.

Remaining jars will be available at the community event at Westdene Green on 11 September.

We will have a display of hive products and promoting both B&L and the *Introduction to Beekeeping* course which will be at The Barn on 18 March 2023.



Ben Castle found [this](#) (above) on YouTube. Scouring sponges and a piece of hosepipe make an effective way of helping bees keep wasps out. Cut the sponges to fit and squeeze into the entrance.

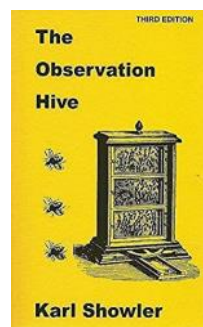


I also bought and installed one of these entrance blocks (above) to see if it prevents robbing from other colonies and wasps entering the hives. This is currently in the Thornes catalogue (probably other outlets make or sell them too!). *[I believe they do, Jude. Ed.]*

Jude New, Apiary Manager

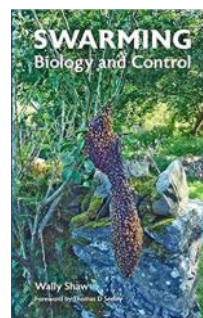
New books to borrow

We've added new books to our library: please [contact our Librarian Barbara Summerfield](#) for details on how to borrow one or more.



The Observation Hive by Karl Showler, third edition, published by BBNO. When first published, this was the only book on the observation hive. Since then

there have been others but Karl Showler has written one which will stand the test of time.



Swarming Biology and Control by Wally Shaw, foreword by Thomas D Seeley, published by Bee-craft. Beekeeping is a difficult craft to learn. Initially the novice has no

framework on which to hang the information to which he/she is being exposed. It requires a certain amount of practical experience of inspecting and handling bees before things start to make sense. For a beginner reading this book, please bear this in mind—it will make sense in a few years' time.

"A brilliant fascinating book easy to read and a must for beekeepers", says our own Jude New.



Variations on a Beehive compiled by Patricia Nelson, published by Northern Bee Books. Trish Nelson is to be commended on compiling this brilliant book. If

you are trying to decide which type of hive is best suited to your particular situation and needs or are just curious, this brilliant book will help you decide and tell you everything you need to know.

Diane Steele inspects



Diane Steele presenting at our Bee Disease Day in May 2022. Photo: Manek Dubash

Our last out-apiary meeting of 2022, to be held on 4 September at the Hove apiary, will be attended by Diane Steele, the Seasonal Bee Inspector.

As you may know, Diane is a highly knowledgeable and personable individual who has inspected many of our members' hives. She also presented at the Bee Disease Day that we held at the Laughton Parish Hall (see above).

So if you'd like to ask her any questions or simply watch her perform a professional inspection, please come along—but you must book with [Graham Bubloz](#) first.

Apiary sites on offer

Are you looking for an apiary site? It seems there's no shortage of places to put bees. We currently have three offers of land to set up an apiary:

- Ten acres of wild flower meadow in a quiet, rural setting near Uckfield.
 - St Peter & St James Hospice, near Wivelsfield would like bees in its large garden, fields and woodland area.
 - Kittyhawk Farm in Laughton
- Please contact Chairman Graham Bubloz for details (see [back page](#)).

New apiary in doubt

We may not be opening a new apiary after all. Last month we announced that B&L would in 2023 be opening a new apiary at Telscombe, to be run by Jeff Rodrigues and Julie Lawrence.

However, *force majeure* has intervened, as the council has decided it needs the land for other purposes.

Consequently, the B&L committee has decided to rethink our apiary strategy and decide how we manage our apiaries, and even whether we actually need any more apiaries.

The committee will discuss the best way forward when it meets on 19 September: more details next month. Any thoughts on the matter? Please contact Chairman [Graham Bubloz](#).



I was sure the apiary was here somewhere...

B&L hits the media



Our very own [Ian White](#) appeared on ITV Meridian South on 27 July to talk about Asian Hornets (as our Asian Hornet Co-ordinator was on holiday!). You can find the catch-up service [here](#).

Help for newbies is now

Bee Buzz is a WhatsApp group for newbees: it's a roaring success with loads of help. In recent days, it's been awash with glorious pictures of jars, supers and buckets of honey.

But there's also been plenty of near-instant help from B&L's experts who are also in the group, and who are more than happy to help.

There are no questions too basic—and no questions that can be called silly, just answers (and hopefully none of those in that group!).

Do join—please contact [Jude New](#) for details.

News snippets

- **Blois:** Fancy a bee-themed visit to France? Lewes is twinned with Blois, an attractive town on the Loire in France, and just a few hours' drive from Dieppe. The committee is considering setting up a visit with beekeepers in Blois but we'd like to gauge interest. If that sounds like something you'd like to do, please contact Graham Bubloz, whose details are on [the back page](#).
- **Honey sales:** we are considering setting up a honey sales database with the aim of helping you sell your honey. More details later.
- **Syrup and fondant:** B&L has a small stock of syrup and fondant, bought at bulk prices. If you'd like to buy some, contact Membership Secretary / Treasurer Norman Dickinson (see [back page](#)).
- **Facebook:** B&L's Facebook group is now well over 100+ strong—over two-thirds of the membership. There's plenty of comments every day, with everyone learning off each other. I don't think anyone expected it to be so successful. Keep it up!
- **First aid kits:** B&L cannot for safety reasons supply medicines—such as anti-histamine and epipens—at our apiaries. If you think you may need such supplies, please bring your own. We do have on-site first-aid kits for minor injuries and the like.



Above: Cuddly bee. Photo: Ross Eager



Above: Sharing: worker feeding a drone. Photo: Lisa White



Above & below: working at Prairie Gardens. Photos: Manek Dubash



You're not having any more bees in my garden! Photo: Rick Butcher





B&L events 2022/23

Out-apiary meetings 2022

Date	Apiary	Leader	Topic
4 Sept	Hove	Jude New	Winter preparation/oxalic acid. NB: Seasonal Bee Inspector Diane Steele will be in attendance

*Outdoor meeting timings may change as circumstances/ weather dictate.
Pre-booking mandatory for Hove only: contact Graham Bubloz [here](#).*

Winter meetings 2022

Please note the NEW VENUE FOR MEETINGS. SEE BELOW

Date	Speaker(s)	Topic
14 Sept	Various	Experts' Q&A. Topics: WBC hives, oxalic acid, Asian hornets, cleaning equipment, training courses
19 Oct	Bob Smith	Your bees have died: what happened, what to do?
16 Nov	TBA	
14 Dec	Lynne Ingram	The truth about honey (Zoom only)

*All winter in-person meetings will now be held at our **NEW VENUE**:
Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes BN7 2LR.*

Deadlines

Please send all contributions for the newsletter, **including photos**, to the Editor (details on right). Max. length: 500 words.

Copy deadline: 18th of the month before the publication date (except December: 11th). Email photos etc. for the website to Webmaster Gerald Legg (details on right).

Publication date: 25th of the month.

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Disclaimer

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 by the Division.



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- **Grassroots:** Jude New

- **Hove:** Jude New

- **Isfield:** Ian White

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