

Brighton & Lewes Beek

A DIVISION OF THE SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & Honey Show
Wednesday 15 February, 7.15pm,
Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes



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- B&L beekeeper forced to quit
- [Photo Corner](#)
- Photos of the B&L 2022 Christmas meal
- [Meetings and contacts](#)
- All the latest meeting updates.
- New:** spring/summer out-apiary meeting dates

EDITORIAL



Boroscope image by Ross Eager

Christmas seems a long time ago already; isn't that always the way?

Nevertheless, I've managed to remember to include [in this issue](#) the pictures that Graham took of our splendid Christmas dinner, attended by 28 B&L members and partners. Maybe that memory will help to cheer us up through one of the dreariest months of the year.

Honey Show and AGM

But as well as being a bit gloomy, February is when we do our housekeeping, in the form of the AGM.

Slightly more exciting (!) is the Honey Show, taking place alongside the AGM. This is your opportunity to show off your skills at making things out of hive products—including bees.

This could be wax wraps, honey in all its forms, photos, cakes and biscuits (made with honey of course), candles and wax

itself. So if you fancy winning a nice cup and gaining the approbation and applause of your fellow beekeepers, now is the time to get cracking. [Details on p2.](#)

See you at the AGM on 15 Feb.

Seeing your bees in a new light

Both Paul Tarry and Ross Eager recently shared on the B&L Buzz WhatsApp group some fascinating videos and photos from the insides of their hives using a boroscope. That's a slim tubular camera attached to the phone, with a light on the end that illuminates the bees without disturbing them. They have a multitude of other uses too.

Take a look at the images above and ask yourself whether or not you don't suddenly need such a device.

Christmas wasn't *that* long ago...

BBKA Spring Convention

I've never been to the [BBKA Spring Convention](#) but I plan to go this year.

There's a trade show, plus practical workshops and lectures galore, all over a three-day event. It's held at Harper Adams University, an agricultural college in the picturesque Shropshire countryside.

So as well as the aforementioned, the BBKA reckons there are bargains to be had as well as a chance to chat to other beekeepers, and join in with the debates in Speakers' Corner. See you there?

Manek Dubash, Editor

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

EVENTS

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

NEXT MONTH

- AGM edition
- Seasonal hints & tips
- News updates
- Latest 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

Brighton & Lewes Beekeepers Division Annual General Meeting & Honey Show

Date and time

**Wednesday 15 February 2023,
Eastgate Church Hall, Lewes, 19.15**
The Annual General Meeting, the most important meeting of the year, is almost upon us. All members welcome!

AGM: elections

All current officers are standing again this year, but we still have a vacancy for the Secretary's post. This will have been vacant for 12 months come the AGM. It is a crucial but not onerous role, so please consider helping out.

Rules

- Any member can stand
- Nominees must have a proposer and seconder, and should sign the form to signify that they are willing to stand
- All nomination forms must be returned to [Chairman Graham Bubloz](#)

- Deadline for nominations:
Wednesday 8 February 2023
- Forms will be emailed to all members before the deadline

Honey Show

The Honey Show runs concurrently with the AGM.

Just how good is your wax, honey, photography and/or honey confectionery? Here's your chance to pit your skills against those of other members of the Division; the rules and classes are set out below. Essentially, **ensure that your entries are in by 8 February 2023.**

Note that there's a special prize if you've never won anything before. Winners will be judged and announced at the Show, together with suitable fanfare and applause!

Photographs (jpg format only please, max size 4MB) need to be submitted by

email and will be projected on the evening.

We hope it will be a better way to show off your photos and give those without fancy printers an incentive to compete.

Points mean prizes

Points are awarded in each class and the person who gains the most points will be awarded the Dixon Hurst Cup, so the more classes you enter, the better your chances.

Novice Cup

The Novice Cup is awarded for the most points gained by a member who has not won anything before. The Honey Cake Salver trophy is awarded for the best Honey Cake.

Please have a go, you still have time to make, bake and edit, so we hope for a good turnout.

Brighton and Lewes Division Honey Show Rules

Wednesday 15th February 2023

Judges: Gerald Legg assisted by Jude New for Classes 1 – 9, Gerald Legg for Class 10 & 11

-o0 How about taking part in some of the classes? Awards & Cups to be won. 0o-

You need to:

- Send your **Entry Form** and **Photographs** by email by [Wednesday 8 February 2023](#) for free entry to all classes to Bob Curtis; poshpix@me.com
- Bring your entries for Classes 1 - 9 to the meeting on [Wednesday 15 February 2023 at 7pm](#). On the night entry fee is £1.00 per class.
- Photographs for Classes 10 & 11 must be submitted digitally to poshpix@me.com
- **SCHEDULE FOR CLASSES:**
 - [Class 1](#). One 1lb Jar Clear honey.
 - [Class 2](#). One 1lb Jar Naturally Crystallised honey.
 - [Class 3](#). Two 1lb Jars of similar honey.
 - [Class 4](#). One Honey Jar Label of your own design on an empty 1lb jar.
 - [Class 5](#). One Moulded candle.
 - [Class 6](#). One 1oz block of wax.
 - [Class 7](#). One Honey Cake. As per the recipe below/overleaf.
 - [Class 8](#). Six Honey Biscuits. **Your own recipe to be provided with biscuits.**
 - [Class 9](#). A wax wrap
 - [Class 10](#). A bee related photograph (Max file size 4mb jpeg).
 - [Class 11](#). A close-up shot of a bee (Max file size 4mb jpeg).

Points are awarded for each class. The member with the most points across classes 1 to 10 will be awarded the Dixon Hurst Cup.

1st prize – 5 points

2nd prize – 3 points

3rd prize – 2 points

The Novice with the Highest Points will be awarded the Novice Tray. Awarded to the person with the most points who has not won a first place in a previous B&L Honey Show.

The Best Honey Cake will win the Honey Salver

RULES:

- All classes are only for members of Brighton and Lewes Beekeeping Division.
- No entry fee for classes with Entry Forms received by the Sunday prior to the AGM, otherwise £1.00 per class.
- **Classes 1 – 3, 5 - 6 & Classes 9 - 11:** maximum of two entries, only your highest score will go towards the Dixon Hurst Cup.
- **Class 4:** One Honey Jar Label of your own design on an empty 1lb jar.
- **Classes 5 & 6:** The Wax must come from your own apiary.
- **Classes 7 & 8:** maximum one entry
- **Honey:** must be from the member's apiary.
- **Jars:** must be unlabelled, 1lb glass jars with gold lid (except for class 4).
- **Cakes and biscuits:** to be presented on a plate and covered with cling film. (The Honey used should be from the member's own apiary or locally produced honey.)
- **Classes 10 & 11.** Photographs must be submitted in digital format preferably jpeg at a max file size 4mb (Larger files will be accepted if they can be sent by email). All entries remain the copyright of the author. Entries may be used in the B&L Newsletters and website and will be credited to the author.

Recipe for Class 7

Honey Fruit Cake – made to recipe below:

50g Honey,
2 eggs,
150g SR Flour,
60g Demerara sugar,
200g butter or margarine,
200g mixed fruit,
1 tablespoon milk.

Method:

Put honey, sugar and milk together in a warm place and leave until honey is dissolved. Beat in remainder of ingredients.

Bake in cool oven for about 1½ hours at 150°C, Gas Mark 2 (this time and temperature is only a guide).

Size of round tin to be used should not exceed 7½" diameter.

Seasonal tips for February

For the beginner

There's not a lot you can do until you get your bees, so go on holiday and research basic beekeeping.

There's a number excellent books on the market aimed at all levels of experience. Here are just three:

- [Bees & Honey](#) by Ted Hooper is a bit of a dense read but highly informative.
- [Beekeeping for Dummies](#); less intense; ignore the bit about bears
- Clair & Adrian Waring's [Haynes Bee Manual](#), which the Division uses as a teaching aid.

You could borrow a book from the Division's library. There's a [list of titles](#) on the website, and you can email our Librarian Barbara Summerfield [here](#).

Equipment

Where to start? There's a number of practical questions, such as the type of hive to use. Most use the Modified National design but there are others. It depends on [what kind of beekeeper you want to be](#).

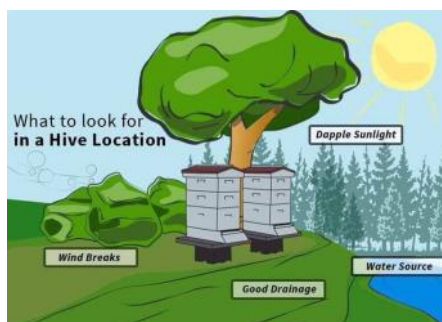


British Modified National hive

Make sure the hives and components are readily available, or make your own. Stick with one design; some parts will interchange but not all.

Location

Then there is the question of where to site your hive. There are some [good leaflets](#) available from the BBKA. But in general, allow at least 600mm around each hive to give you space to work and to put things down.



Position hives so they can be approached from the side or rear. Face the entrance into a hedge or fence so the bees have to fly up above head height before orientating. Don't point the entrance across a path; bees are very single-minded and fly in straight lines, so if anyone is in the way they will get a bee in the side of the head.

Make up hive and frames. Save putting foundation in until later but remember to do it—the Swarm Co-ordinator will be miffed if they ring you with a swarm and you're not ready.

Education

[Jude New](#), our Training Co-ordinator, will be running courses in 2023:

- Introduction to Beekeeping, for those still thinking about keeping bees. A full day, with guest speakers.
- Beginner Beekeepers, for those who have just got bees or are starting out this year
- BBKA Basic Assessment for those who have been keeping bees for a couple of years.
- BBKA Module 2: Honey Bee Products and Forage

All courses are planned to be in Westdene, Brighton, and at our apiaries.

For the experienced

As well as all the stuff above, there will be winter tasks to do.

Clean and repair old used equipment from last year. Do something with wax: make cosmetics, candles, [wax wraps](#), or swap it at Paynes for clean foundation.

Feeding and hive care

February is when the days noticeably lengthen, and the queen starts to lay. So clear still days are ideal to think of your

bees, as the growing colony can eat through the stores left on in autumn. Do they have enough stores to see them through the rest of the winter? Heft the hive. If it's not heavy, look inside. If you're unsure they have fondant, put some on. If they need it, they will take it, if not, they won't.

Check the entrance is clear. A blocked entrance can stop the bees taking cleansing flights which could lead to diarrhoea or even worse. Ensure the entrance is at the top, so any build-up of dead bees will be below the entrance.

Are the mouse guards clear of dead bees? Are the hives weather-tight? Is the mesh still in place to deter woodpeckers. Can you still find the hive among the undergrowth?

It's not too late to treat for varroa using oxalic acid. There will be brood in the hive and you may have to treat two or three times to catch all the mites.

Planning is all

Work on your swarm management. Plant bee-friendly flowers: most native annuals or perennials are good or if you want something a bit more exotic, try something from any temperate region. American prairie flowers do well in England.



[Helianthus](#): great for bees

Consider rearing queens this year. Do you need to change the brood comb, if so, will you do a shook swarm or a Bailey comb change?

All the answers to these, and many, many more questions can be found in a library, on [our website](#), [our Facebook page](#), YouTube or by asking a friend.

Hope to see you soon.

The Veiled Beekeeper



Graham Bubloz
Chairman

Words from the Chair

This month we're holding our Annual Honey Show in combination with the Annual General Meeting.

The [details for the Honey Show are on p2](#) and on the [website](#). These events both take place on 15 February. Please try and come along to the Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Lewes (7.15pm for a 7.30pm start) to support us.

B&L spreads its wings

As mentioned before, we have been extending the invitation to attend our hybrid Zoom (video conferencing) talks to our colleagues in the High Weald Beekeepers Association. This seems to have been successful so far, so we plan to share the final two meetings in March and April with ALL of the Sussex Beekeepers. (By the way, when I say "hybrid" I mean that we have an audience in the hall at Lewes as well as members who join in via Zoom.)

Bulk purchasing

We find ourselves a victim of our own success: Tony Birkbeck (committee member and apiary manager) has recently been organising the bulk purchase of honey jars on behalf of individual members.

I sent out an email in early January to everyone with the estimated pricing. We get a good discount in price if we order whole

pallet loads of them. Unfortunately, I didn't make that clear.

We currently have orders for two pallets – but there are a couple more members who want jars but we are currently unable to fulfil their request because we don't yet have sufficient orders for a whole pallet. So, if we can persuade another dozen or so members who also wish to buy some jars, then hopefully everyone can take advantage. Please contact [Tony](#).

Opening up the hive

It's not long before we'll all be opening up the hives for a peek after the winter months, and so I suspect if you're like me, your time will be filled this month in getting equipment cleaned up and ready. The evenings are getting lighter. I'm looking forward to the spring. —Photo: David Evans (*The Apiarist*)



Hints and tips from a Norwegian beekeeper

Report of a fascinating talk to B&L by Anund Helgesun



A healthy turn-out for the talk on a freezing cold day. Photo: Manek Dubash

an interesting and entertaining talk talking about how he keeps his bees.

Here's how it came about. In August 2022, out of the blue, I received an email from Anund. He knew that he would be spending a week with his work colleagues in the Brighton area in late September 2022, and wondered whether he could attend one of our monthly meetings?

Unfortunately, our meetings and his availability did not coincide, and so instead I suggested that we meet up at lunchtime in a local pub. We did just that, where we were also joined by B&L member Mim Gee for a bite and a chat.

We only had a couple of hours, but it was interesting to hear Anund's stories. We ended by taking a visit to my apiary and Anund was grateful to be able to see what English bees look like and take a look at the flora and fauna in our neck of the woods.

He lives in the Telemark part of Norway in a very rural location. I have shown his plot in the photo overleaf. He has a reasonably large number of hives (78 at the last count) but his interests extend way beyond beekeeping, including hunting and

(Continued on page 5)

On 18 January, Anund Helgesen, a 56-year-old Norwegian beekeeper, gave us

Hints and tips from a Norwegian beekeeper (cont.)

Report of a fascinating talk to B&L by Anund Helgesun



Anund Helgesun's plot.

fishing. He's also a schoolteacher teaching biology and science subjects.

He is a member of the Norwegian queen rearing programme and attends national and international conferences on every aspect of beekeeping. Goodness knows where he finds the time for all these activities and his work as a teacher.

When I asked Anund if he could give a talk (remotely) to our group, he was a little uncertain because he felt his English language wasn't good enough; fortunately, I managed to twist his arm.

One thing you will have noticed is that he has only one arm: he lost his right arm after a motorbike accident in 1985. So we're left wondering: where does he get the time and how on earth he manages with one arm.

Beekeeping: Anund's way

Anund talked about his way of ensuring that he has thriving hives in the spring by feeding them with his own recipe of fondant and pollen, and then compressing the bees by forcing



Bees compressed by dummy boards

them onto a few centrally mounted frames in his Standard Norwegian Hives (about the same size as a large Langstroth). You can see the dummy boards in the image above, and the surplus bees squeezed onto the central few frames. Note that Anund's brood boxes and supers are the same size. The end result is a frame full of brood; he clears any nectar stored and this gives space for the queen to fill the frame. He had to ensure that he rapidly added supers as soon as the nest began to increase in the spring.

Queen rearing

Anund went on to demonstrate a simple and very cost-effective method of raising queen cells in a single colony using the existing equipment, by swapping the super and the brood boxes around, and then back again.

This used the Nicot system for building up queen cells. He then showed us a short [video](#) of his friend demonstrating the method. He further showed a cell-builder system to breed queens.

Later in the season, Anund takes bees to fields of heather on a trailer.



Top: A very full frame of brood: wall to wall



Above: Trailering bees to the heather

Extraction

He shared a photo of his 6m by 8m extraction room, which included a heather loosener machine (circa £5,000) which is used to help extract the glutinous honey from the frames.

He does have some help from friends and beekeeping neighbours. This partially explains how he lifts frames and grafts larvae—but even so, he is a quite remarkable man. We also saw his six-year-old son filling the feeders with a precise amount of sugar syrup, as measured by the meter on the pump.

I think I speak for most by stating you missed an interesting one. For those that made it, I hope that you enjoyed it.

(Continued on page 6)



Anund's pollen/fondant mix



Queen rearing using the Nicot system

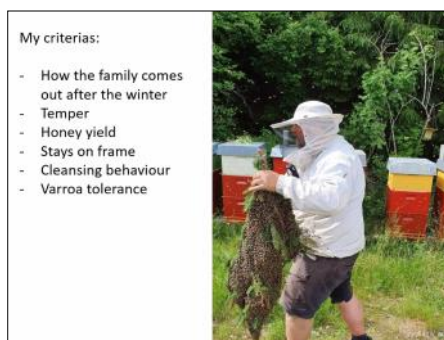
Hints and tips from a Norwegian beekeeper (cont.)

Report of a fascinating talk to B&L by Anund Helgesun

I am hopeful that I may be able to persuade Anund to give another talk on a specific area of beekeeping that should prove equally fascinating. Please let me know if you're interested.

Words by Graham Bubloz

Photos by Anund Helgesun



Anund's extraction room



Anund's son filling the feeders



Above two photos: Anund showed us his queen grafting procedure

Why I had to give up beekeeping: a sad tale by a B&L member



Following the very cold few days we had pre-Christmas, when I thought my bees had died as they were not taking fondant, so I was excited to see them buzzing around. They carried out a few dead bodies but generally seemed

quite healthy, they resumed fondant consumption, and all was well.

Now, early January, the weather is a little warmer and I am due to treat the girls to a blast of oxalic acid.

Hive one: all were tucked away in the warmth of the hive and only scuffled a little with the vapour taking over their home. Hive two: equally calm and little reaction to the vapour. I was feeling very accomplished until the plate on the vaporiser got stuck and as I pulled it from the hive it broke the entrance, and a few unhappy bees came to investigate.

The sting in the tale

One particularly grumpy girl then managed to sting me. I decided to leave them for a few minutes and go back later to refit the broken entrance. I returned up the garden to the house.

Within five minutes of being stung I was very itchy and knew this was not how I had reacted to previous stings. I told my husband I was going to pop down to the walk-in centre at Uckfield

hospital. He insisted on driving (fortunately)

We arrived and as I walked in the entrance, I collapsed. No pulse, no recordable blood pressure. I was carried into the treatment room, given adrenaline injections, chlorphenamine (antihistamine) Salbutamol (for breathing) and fluids through a canular the size of a knitting needle! And then transferred to A&E at Eastbourne General Hospital. Diagnosis: anaphylaxis.

I was advised it was a very close call and am extremely lucky to be here, thanks to the superb medical services and receiving treatment within 25 minutes of being stung.



Why I had to give up beekeeping: a sad tale by a B&L member (cont.)

I was also strongly advised to remove the risk of it happening again, so very sadly I have had to say 'goodbye' to my bees.

My sincere thanks to Tony B for helping me out and relocating them.

I was also so looking forward to taking part in this year's upcoming course but have had to withdraw.

Thank you to B&L

I would like to thank B&L for all the help and support I have received, the apiary visits, talks, newsletters, advice etc. The group has been invaluable with a wealth of experience.

Thank you too for the beautiful flowers I received from B&L, such a very kind and lovely thought.

Wishing you all a very safe, successful and productive 2023 season

(while I stay safely at home with my jars of purchased honey and an EpiPen!)

Words & photos by Thelda Bryant

NB: Thelda is selling her beekeeping equipment as a consequence of her anaphylactic response, so see below for the sale of the week.

Thelda's beekeeping equipment sale

As a consequence of her unfortunate and life-threatening experience of anaphylaxis (see previous page), B&L member Thelda Bryant has sadly been forced to give up beekeeping. She is putting her equipment up for sale. To enquire, contact her [on email](#) or call 01825 732301.



Price list

- 6 sachets of Apiguard, expiry 2025: £10
- 2 rapid feeders: £1.50 each
- 1 Smoker: £12
- 1 Queen cage and white marker (unused): £5
- 2 protective bee suits: (1 large, worn once, 1 medium): £45/£35. Only one shown for space reasons: they look very similar.
- 1 poly hive, mesh floor, 2 supers plus 1 unused super, roof, queen excluder, inspection board: £45
- 1 hive J-tool: £5
- 1 refractor: £10. Not shown.
- 1 Vaporiser (connect to car battery): £15
- 3 frame manual honey extractor in stainless steel (includes handle, legs and tap) used once! £80
- 30 Unused frames (national) no foundation: £15

The B&L 2022 Christmas meal—in pictures

It may seem a little late to report on the Christmas meal (remember that?), and so it is. I blame the editor who forgot to put it into the January issue!

Nonetheless, here is that photographic report of a fine evening, organised largely by Jude New, of how 28 beekeepers and their partners came to find themselves in a pub in Hassocks—the Friars Oak—with platefuls of Christmas-themed comestibles in front of them. There are more photos on the next page.

Manek Dubash, Editor



Images of beautiful beekeepers on 13 December 2022!
The quiz, hosted by Julie Lawrence, top right, was clearly concerning some of them...
Photos by Graham Bubloz (thanks G.)

The B&L 2022 Christmas meal—in pictures (cont)





B&L events 2023

Winter meetings

All winter in-person meetings start at 7.15 for a 7.30pm prompt start, at Eastgate Baptist Church Hall, Eastgate Street, Lewes BN7 2LR. Links for online meetings—marked Zoom—will be sent out before the meeting. Zoom+physical meetings will consist of a remote speaker on video at the hall, and the meeting broadcast online to members, linked as above.

Date	Speaker	Topic
15 Feb	-	AGM & Honey Show
15 Mar	Malcolm Wilkie	How to handle and produce queens
19 Apr	Nigel Kermode	The social side of beekeeping

Spring/summer meetings

Date	Location	Topic
29 Apr	Barcombe (Tony B.)	Swarm control, collection and hiving
30 Apr	Grassroots (Jude N.)	Swarm control, collection and hiving
13 May	Isfield (Ian W.)	Swarm control, collection and hiving

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.

grassroots
grants

Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

The co-operative membership
Community Fund

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