

THE BUZZ

CENTRAL SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

CHARITY 1051548

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Photo Credit: Club Member, Andy Hibberd "Bee on globe artichoke"

Welcome to the August 2022 edition of The Buzz

August is notoriously the month to prepare and harvest honey. If you do not already have supplies it is also the time to purchase your honey jars and labels, chosen Varroa treatment, book your slot with Matt Arbuthnot to hire the CSBKA extractor/s and place your order with Ade for inverted syrup.

Events coming up include The South of England Honey Show and the National Honey Show, also the Ploughing Match where we will be having a Honey Pitch 🍯 – more details inside this newsletter.

Finally, I am pleased to report bumper attendances at our recent Saturday morning meetings. It really is extremely rewarding for the Apiary Team to see you all!

Yolanda Noye



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Ben Hewson

It is often said that if you ask a question to a group of twenty beekeepers you will get twenty different answers. Perhaps that is because bees represent the eternal conundrum, constantly fascinating and always puzzling. What is also undeniable is the time we spend considering the behaviour of our bees. Humans have a deep-set desire to understand and control. Through trial and error, we build our knowledge to manipulate our colonies. Is it this constant battle of wits and wills that keeps us so engaged?



How many of us would keep bees even if jars of golden, delicious honey were not the reward? I found myself pondering this question whilst getting very hot, sweaty, sticky and stung during the hottest weather on record – the answer was not immediately clear. However, after the inspection was done, everything put away and I was able to step back with something else golden and delicious - though a lot colder, wetter and not at all sticky, I believed my answer was “Yes!”.

The pleasure comes from not controlling the bees but by aiding them, helping, and nurturing a complex society of living creatures whose sole purpose is selfless devotion to the colony. It then dawned on me, have I become their unwitting servant, little more than an oversized drone?

At that point I was very glad that I get jars of honey in recognition of my service!

The summer has been glorious and looks set to continue, don't forget your CSBKA friends if you have a problem. Like the bees, they are selfless when it comes to advice and help (the WhatsApp group has been brilliant of late) and do check out the apiary demonstrations and talks. The wealth of knowledge on display is breath taking and I guarantee every visitor becomes a better bee servant!

Once again, I wish you all good luck and happy beekeeping.

All the best.



NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Ade Belcham

August 2023

Phew – a bumper season ... 'nuff said on that (!) ... but watch out for the sting in the tail. With the very dry spell we've had of late the nectar flow has stopped with a bang over the last days of July. If you've harvested honey, you may need to feed early to bridge the gap until the rain and the ivy arrive. Although, the Himalayan balsam and water mint appear to have come early so that will help some. If you have nucs you would be wise to keep an eye on stores and robbing. And, of course, be prepared for a change in bee mood. Colonies that were mellow a week ago may be homicidal for a while! They are protecting their hard-won treasures. Can't blame them after all the work it has taken to bring it in but can be a surprise if you're not expecting it.

We've had some very well attended Saturday mornings at the apiary during July. A big thank you to everyone who came along and to Melvyn and the other fabulous presenters who put themselves out there to share their experience and lead the discussions each week. And to Yo of course for the cake!

August meetings are largely focused on the post-harvest tasks that are geared toward preparing the colonies for winter. However, we've also got a session planned on selling honey which might be relevant to a lot of people this year.

	10am Discussion Topic (followed by Apiary Jobs)
6 August	Varroa treatment using Formic Pro
13 th August	Feeding bees
20 th August	Selling Honey – Rules and Regulations
27 th August	Preparing for Winter Part 1 – Full colonies
3 rd September	Preparing for Winter Part 2 – Nucleus colonies

In the meantime, a few more pictures from recent Saturday morning meetings





Phil you may like these!







TIPS OF THE MONTH – Melvyn Essen

Thoughts move from swarm management and adding supers to harvesting honey and then Varroa monitoring / treatments / winter feeding.

If you are lucky enough to have some honey in your supers then you need to check if the Nectar has been processed into honey with the water content reduced below 20%, ideally 17-18%. This can be measured with using a refractometer (pictured below). The practical way is to wait until the honey is capped over then hold the frame not quite flat but allow for the slope of the cells, then give it a sharp jerk downwards, if any honey falls out then it is not ready. Don't take a chance with it, you may regret it with fermented honey. Sometimes if the bees have collected some late nectar, they will store it in the middle of the frame and this will be the last to be capped, delaying the harvesting.



It is also wise to decide on a Varroa treatment at this stage, so you are ready to treat at the correct time to ensure the winter bees are free of Varroa. Just a quick overview on popular Varroa treatments, there are two treatments using acid, it is hoped Varroa mites will not become resistant to acid, Oxalic acid & Formic acid (Formic Pro).

Finally feeding your bees for the winter - It is better to give the bees enough food for the winter in one go, rather than relying on topping up with fondant during the winter. Inverted syrup is considered the best but expensive, it doesn't ferment and is easier on the bees. Granulated sugar syrup is cheaper but relies on the bees converting it to be stored and can ferment. If feeding late inverted syrup is safer for the bees and is available to buy via CSBKA.

A close-up photograph of a bumblebee on a yellow flower head. The bee is positioned on the right side of the frame, facing left. Its body is covered in yellow and black fur, and its wings are partially visible. The flower is a bright yellow, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

THERE IS SOME DISSENT AS TO THE HISTORY OF THE BEES WE KEEP IN HIVES IN THE UK – Andy Campbell

Apis Mellifera or the western honeybee may have evolved in Africa and spread out to Europe and Asia, or it may always have been European based and spread to Asia and Africa. A specific variety settled in the UK – the black bee, and for many centuries this was the only honeybee kept in skeps mainly by monks in sometimes large apiaries. Sometime, probably in the 1600s, when bees were imported to America, there was also some movement of bees from Eastern Europe and Asia into the UK.

Later, the commercialisation of honey production and the need to increase production, led to a gradual realisation among beekeepers, that different queens created colonies of bees that had different traits to the black bees they had traditionally been working with. This led to the importation of bees from different areas with various traits, and the almost total eradication of the native black bee. These bees, often described as Eurasian, were capable of living in far larger colonies and producing far more honey than the native bees. They were also sometimes considerably less easy to handle, more aggressive and/or defensive, and to a degree, that made them less desirable in any apiary - no matter how productive they were.

The importation of these bees also directly led to varroa being spread from Asia to all parts of the world and even this year to Australia. This is due mainly to swarms mixing and breeding with native colonies to the extent that today all bees, except for in a few very isolated places, are mongrel feral colonies with mixed ancestry. You will often hear the word 'feral' used to describe bees and it is probably fair to suggest that apart from colonies born of artificially inseminated queens in very controlled circumstances, all bees in the UK are feral today. The numbers and variation over time of *apis mellifera* living in wild colonies is very difficult to pin down, as much like other areas of beekeeping, it is largely based on anecdotal evidence.

The losses of bees due to varroa from the 1990s onwards was though obvious, and many beekeepers suffered catastrophic losses. Treatments based on various chemicals were created and most work to some extent and have made large profits for the companies selling them. But what has always been known is the ability for bees, like all other animals, to develop either habits or resistance to similar infestations, aided by allowing the mixing of managed colonies that have been adequately treated for varroa, with wild colonies. The swarming of your bees then, provided they have received adequate treatment for varroa, will aid the natural ability of bees in the wild to recover from their losses.



FULKING FAIR – Yolanda Noye

Pip and an enthusiastic team of volunteers represented CSBKA at the recent Fulking Fair – the latest update received was over 30lbs of honey sold and several potential new members signed up to receive information on next year's Beekeeping for Beginners Course. It was a glorious day, and our stand was certainly attracting a lot of attention with Gareth in superb form educating and entertaining the younger audience.

Thank you to everyone who helped Pip out on the day.



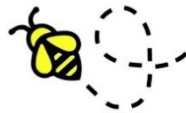


EVENTS

5th – 11th September – Asian Hornet Week

The 4th Asian Hornet week is being held at the beginning of September. Established by the BBKA it aims to raise awareness of the Asian Hornet through a series of activities planned for the week. Find out more by visiting the [BBKA Asian Hornet Week](#) page. The free Asian Hornet Watch App is also available, and we encourage everyone (if you haven't done so already) to download this so any potential sightings can be immediately reported.

The App looks like this and is available for both android and iPhone devices.



17th September (Saturday) – West Grinstead & District, Ploughing Match & Show

We will again be hosting a Honey Pitch at the Ploughing Match.

CSBKA Volunteers are needed to help during the day PLEASE!

You don't need to be an experienced beekeeper, just bring along your passion and enthusiasm for bees and have a chat to people. Morning/afternoon/couple of hours is fine and lets the others on the stall have an opportunity to look around – please contact Pip Edgcombe at csbkamembership@gmail.com with Ploughing Match in the Subject Line and let her know if you can assist. Help would also be gratefully received for the set up from 9.00am and ... to take everything down at the end of the day (approx. 5.00pm/6.00pm).

The Ploughing Match is held in Dial Post – visit <https://www.westgrinsteadploughing.co.uk/> for more information.



24th/25th September - South of England Honey Show: Selsfield Road, Ardingly, RH17 6TL - (9am to 6.30pm)

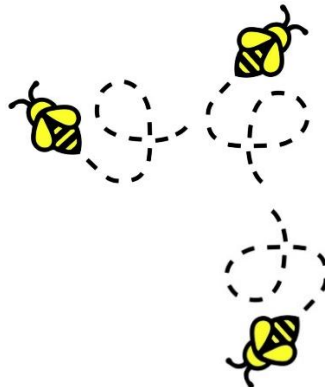
Previously held in the Bees & Honey Marquee at the South of England Show during June now more conveniently later in the beekeeping year and indoors, the South of England Honey Show is being held as part of the Autumn Show & Horse Trials. Top Judge Bill Fisher will be judging all classes this year a great opportunity to enter your honey at a regional show a month before the National Honey Show takes place in October. Visit this page <https://www.seas.org.uk/competing-autumn-show-horse-trials/> to see more information and access the Bees & Honey Schedule & Entry Form.



27th to 29th October - 91st National Honey Show, Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ



Purchase your day tickets for the 2022 from 1st September until 11.59pm on Monday 11 October! Schedule and visitor bands are sent out to the original purchaser following placement of order. For more information and a copy of the Schedule visit <https://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>





NOTICES

A big THANK YOU to Peter Bedford!

The carpentry skills of one of our members is clear to see here! Thank you, Peter, for designing and putting together these new sturdy hive stands for the club Apiary. An excellent feature of the design is a bespoke frame holder, very handy when carrying out inspections. It was not long before one of the new stands was used and Hive 4 was the first lucky recipient!



A request from Stephen Barnes, Chair of BBKA

The delegates at the 2022 ADM overwhelmingly mandated the EC to take action to address the issues of adulterated/fake honey. One of the actions was to start a petition to ask the government to update and overhaul the labelling requirements for the sale of honey. The petition closes on the 7th of August and so far has been signed by 7,500 people which is only 25% of the Association's members. A further 2,500 signatures are required to force the government to respond. Please can I encourage you and your friends to sign up.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/news/honey-labelling-petition>

