

# THE BUZZ

CENTRAL SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

CHARITY 1051548

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editors Notes

Chairmans Notes

News from the Apiary

Tips of the Month

Contributor Features

Events & Notices

Resources

## CSBKA COMMITTEE

Melvyn Essen (President 07811 070294)

Ben Hewson (Chairperson)

Ben Donnachie (Hon Treasurer)  
[treasurer@centralsussexbka.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@centralsussexbka.org.uk)

Kim Mair/Fiona Hiron (Hon Secretaries)  
[secretary@centralsussexbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@centralsussexbka.org.uk)

Pip Edgcombe (Membership Secretary)  
[membership@centralsussexbka.org.uk](mailto:membership@centralsussexbka.org.uk)

Matt & Glynnis Arbutnot  
(Marketing & Fundraising)

Ade Belcham (Apiary Coordinator)

Pip Edgcombe (Events/Show Co-Ordinator)

Yolanda Noye (Newsletter Editor 07775 841535)  
[newsletter@centralsussexbka.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@centralsussexbka.org.uk)

Piers Pollard (School Liaison Officer)

Viv Sallows (Convention Coordinator)

Otto Somodi (Website Coordinator)  
[webmaster@centralsussexbka.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@centralsussexbka.org.uk)



Welcome to the July 2022 Edition of The Buzz.

This lovely picture above was taken by Melvyn, and I am reliably informed that it is one of his very own bees foraging on Ribbed Melilot (also known as yellow sweet clover) at Shipley – it's grown there for winter bird food and has made a fantastic display this year.

Your CSBKA committee has been busy behind the scenes, and two events have been secured. The Fulking Fair next weekend on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> July and the West Grinstead Ploughing Match on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September – please support your Club and help on our stall, more information inside this issue.

I'm also pleased to report that more members have been attending the Saturday morning meetings, I may even have to bake two cakes now (!). The apiary meetings are not just for beginners. It is an opportunity for all members to share their experiences and exchange new ideas, inventions, and bee stories in general! No need to stay on after the topic/talk has been delivered but obviously, the more hands the merrier when it comes to carrying out apiary jobs – just saying! See you all soon!

Yolanda Noye



## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Ben Hewson

And just like that, June is gone in flash, a month when the words “June Gap” is a hot topic in beekeeping circles. Much discussion surrounds the existence of this period of hard forage for the bees brought on by the drought of flowering plants at the beginning of the summer season following the demise of the earlier spring blossoms. As an association that spans urban and rural areas, we hold an enviable position to shed some light on the perennial questions that surround the June Gap ....

Does it actually exist?

Is it confined to countryside locations?

Do urban settings fair better?

We would love to collect your experiences and see if we can shed some light on one of beekeeping's conundrums. Do let us know, drop a note on the WhatsApp group.

June is also the month for the South of England show at Ardingly, did anyone visit? There was a strong showing from the beekeeping community, it is amusing to think that our “livestock” at the show outnumber the combine total of every other creature present many thousand times. It is a fabulous day out; I highly recommend it.

Looking ahead to July, perhaps my favourite month in the beekeeping calendar. Is there anything better than being able to relax, after the tenterhooks of swarming season, and sit back on warm sunny days watching the bees come and go with thoughts turning to supers full of honey and the biggest worry is being able to lift them!



Once again, I wish you all good luck – don't forget the WhatsApp group is a great place if you have any questions or need some reassurance – and happy beekeeping.

All the best.



## NEWS FROM THE APIARY – Ade Belcham

I'm writing this at the very end of June. Whatever the books say about dates, the main flow is clearly underway. Lime trees, sweet chestnut and bramble are all in flower and the bees are stashing away nectar like bees' business. It's been a good weather season generally, so fingers crossed it will be a good honey crop. It's time to make sure they've still got plenty of space in the supers and then cross your fingers for a few weeks of good weather and leave them to do what they do best.

My Dad always begins to joke about now that the nights are drawing in. Of course, from a human perspective the summer is just getting going, but it's worth noting that, as we pass the solstice, the bees have turned towards the exhale part of their year. Even as honey making continues full tilt, brood rearing begins to slow and thoughts of swarming fade away. By late July and certainly by early August they are in full winter preparation mode. It took me a few seasons to adjust to this rhythm of the year that is focused on what is actually happening rather than on what the calendar or the school holiday schedule suggests. But watch the trees – first signs of change start in August. Watch the birds – the frantic chick rearing, and territorial singing slows in July, the first migrants begin to leave in August.

But all of this is not me being an Eeyore. I'm actually very grateful to the bees for waking me up to these gradual shifts that take place through the year. It makes me feel alive to the world around me, part of something bigger than human, less buffeted by our dramas and debates, more fundamental somehow.

Blimey – that's me all lyrical and philosophical. Better get back to practicalities. Don't delay - order your honey jars and labels, autumn feed and varroa treatments soon rather than leaving it until the last minute when many suppliers run out. As last year we will be treating with MAQs (now called Formic Pro) at the club apiary and feeding inverted syrup when the time arrives. Also, as last year, I have limited stocks of 14kg drums of Invertbee syrup available for sale. I had to disappoint several people last year so if you can let me know ASAP how many you'd like, I can try to make sure I have enough. It's the same price per kilo as the Payne's refills but you can collect from the club apiary rather than drive over to Hassocks, and the club gets a couple of pounds from each drum. Email me at [adebelcham@icloud.com](mailto:adebelcham@icloud.com) if you're interested.

The following Saturday morning topics during July/August at the Apiary are as follows:

	<b>10am Discussion Topic (followed by Apiary Jobs)</b>
23 July	Disease spotting and hygiene strategies
30 July	Honey harvesting
6 August	Varroa treatment using Formic Pro
13 <sup>th</sup> August	Feeding bees
20 <sup>th</sup> August	Selling Honey – Rules and Regulations
27 <sup>th</sup> August	Preparing for Winter Part 1 – Full colonies

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









## TIPS OF THE MONTH – Melvyn Essen

All those members that have bees will know there has been, and there still is, a great nectar flow on. If you don't have bees, you cannot fail to notice the brambles have been flowering for a long time now and also the amount of clover flowering. If the nectar is there the bees will collect and bring it to the hive if there is room to store it or not! The bees will need to process the nectar, the current hot weather will help them reduce the water content down to under 20%, 17% is about right and should not ferment. If the comb in the super frame is completely capped, then it is ready to extract. Often there is an arc of sealed honey with nectar filling the rest of the frame, you can give the frame the shake test over the super. If nectar flies out it's not ready. You also can use a honey refractometer to test that it's ready to extract which is a more reliable method.

The purpose made clearer board (see photos of examples below) is more reliable than using porter escapes.



More details on clearers can be found on the David Cushman website at <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/clearerboards.htm> run by Roger Patterson.

A useful tip from Richard M is to use an eke (see picture below) between every super when clearing bees, it prevents squashing bees and they clean up any spilt honey before moving down.



During the honey flow nucs have been filled with nectar with lots of brace comb so if you can put a brood extension on top it will give space for the queen to lay. That's if you're not ready to put them in a full hive.

If you have a spare nuc of healthy bees, then there are our 2022 beginners that would be grateful recipients. At the apiary we try to make sure they are confident enough to care for their own bees, and it's very satisfying to pass on surplus colonies and help them get started.



## LOW INTERVENTION HIVE MANAGEMENT – Andy Campbell

*We were very fortunate to receive the following presentation from Andy C at the Apiary recently, even more fortunate is that he prepared a hard copy which follows:*

Keeping bees in hives with removable frames is a relatively modern invention and with the spread of the likes of varroa mites from Asia to the world by the movement of bee colonies, it has been a blessing as well as a curse. A blessing because it means investigation of the brood nest is possible and the removal of honey is easier and a curse for the same reason, as the colony is set back every-time the hive is opened and even more when the brood nest is disturbed.

Beekeeping for other than commercial reasons mean a less invasive management scheme can be used.

Queen activity, swarm management and disease recognition are the main reasons we open our hives every week and during periods when they are very active, the recovery is pretty rapid but still risks disruption to the queen, possibly catastrophic especially if there are no handy replacements and, the longer the hive is open, the longer it takes for them to overcome the disruption, even if no actual changes are made to the brood nest.

No matter how hard you try, your bees will sometimes find a way to swarm if they deem it necessary and they are the best judges of when that is needed, and I don't view it as evil! It may not be convenient for you and your neighbours but that is not the bee's problem, it's how they reproduce and interfering with natural reproduction can have disastrous results.

Clearly an apiary sited where swarming bees are unlikely to be welcomed is not an ideal situation and whilst hedging and fencing can push your bees higher up when leaving and returning to the hive, it won't make an ounce of difference if they swarm. Swarming is not a disaster for the bees, and it is now clear that hived bees from feral colonies that have swarmed, are beginning to display hygienic behaviour and the research is very encouraging.

It's suggested about 75 percent of beekeepers are currently treating their hives for varroa and it's unlikely this behaviour change would have happened at all if beekeepers were not doing this and were they one hundred percent successful in swarm prevention, it may well not have happened at all.

So, in practical terms how do I manage my bees?



Firstly, I spend some time observing the behaviour of the bees at the hive entrance. Getting to know your bees by spending time with them, but not interfering with them in any way, especially with a smoker anywhere near them, is the first step. Take a flask of tea and a comfortable chair, sit to one side, and watch the hive entrance. On a good foraging day there will be a lot of activity at the entrance. Bees leaving, will quickly take off and fly rapidly in straight lines to the identified food sources, be that nectar or pollen. They will return and enter the hive just as quickly. Bees exiting and wandering about, greeting other bees, and re-entering the hive is not a good sign and may signal a pending issue, especially if little pollen is being carried in.

Be aware though, newly promoted foragers tend to be a bit hesitant in flying but always orientate, by flying about three circles climbing above the hive and it is very easy to spot them. Foraging is likely to decrease as swarm preparations are made, because there is no sense in bees wasting energy collecting and storing food in the hive if they are planning on leaving.

Secondly, I use an infra-red camera to confirm where the bees are and how big the colony is in the hive. Big colonies, active all over the hive and foraging well, are unlikely to be planning on leaving. This works better with wooden hives and is one of the primary reasons, along with easier cleaning, that has led me to using mainly wooden hives. I do use poly hives for over-wintering smaller colonies and Payne's poly nucs with built in feeders are very adaptable and useful.

Giving space is important too, but bear in mind wild bee colonies have never lived in expandable spaces and whilst naturally smaller in the number of bees, they are believed to often swarm every year.

So, a national hive with three supers may suit many colonies and the top super can yield some frames of honey for your use without disrupting the rest of the hive at all.

Lastly is the Beehealth Guru app. This was developed over a ten-year period by researchers and beekeepers at the Montana State University with input from beekeepers worldwide and was launched as a user-funded project in 2019 and I have been contributing to it from its earliest days. It works on the principle that "bees buzz". Except, bees change the frequency and other aspects of the sounds they make, depending on conditions in the colony. For a simple test one only must knock on the side of a hive and the increase in frequency and volume is pretty obvious. The app runs on Android and Apple and reads and decodes the sounds over periods of 30 or better 60 seconds and presents the results as an indicator of various conditions in the hive. If you're interested, research online will lead you to the forum at [www.beehealth.guru](http://www.beehealth.guru)

I must stress low intervention is not treatment free!

I treat for varroa with oxalic acid sublimation every year and it has now been confirmed that swarms from such treated hives, when settling into the wild, aids the ability of bees to develop natural schemes for dealing with varroa by detection and destruction in the brood nest.

There was an interesting article mentioning natural varroa resistance in the July BBKA news that I hope you have seen.

So, keeping bees in hives solely for their benefit and accepting that by allowing them to behave as naturally as possible is important to their long-term survival and is the key to low intervention hive management.

16 July 2022



## BEE TALKS FOR SCHOOLS – Piers Pollard



On Friday 1st July I attended The Colgate School Fete with another CSBKA member, Mary Hinton. This was a low-key event organised by two members of the school's Parent Teacher Association. Having been in touch with Hannah, one of the parents, I was thinking about whether I could go along and as it happens, I had a free spot in my diary and I contacted Mary, who agreed to join me.

It was a beautiful sunny afternoon, and we were allocated a table in the shade under a tree at the far side of the field. Unfortunately, there was nowhere to put up a display and no access to an extension lead, so it was not possible to use Melvyn's video of the queen bee, which the children are always intrigued by on my school visits. However, we decided to cover the car (!) with photos and posters of bees in action and waited for the start of the school Fete, not knowing whether we would get anyone venturing across to see what we were offering.

At 3pm the gates opened, and the children and parents rushed in. As it happened, we managed to attract a steady stream of visitors all eager to find out about bees and what they do. We were both kept busy answering questions and listening to the stories. We were also given a vivid account with photos from a mobile phone of a swarm that arrived in a father's living room (obviously down the chimney) with thousands of bees all over the windowsill and the carpet! A salutary tale that some of us have might have experienced when catching swarms. The event was a lot of fun, and we were thanked profusely from the organisers at the time and in the following email received shortly afterwards ...

*Hi Piers,*

*I just wanted to send you an email to say thank you very much for giving up your time to join us at the school summer fete on Friday. It was lovely to meet you and I had a lot of very positive feedback about your stall. Thank you again and hopefully we may see you again next year,*

*Best wishes*

*Hannah*



## BEE TALKS FOR SCHOOLS – Piers Pollard



On Wednesday June 8th I visited Arunside Primary School, Horsham to deliver my Bee and Pollination Talk to the two Year 3 classes. This meant that at the end of the morning, I had given my 7th talk to the children at that school! Previously in 2018 and 2019 I was fortunate enough to be able to use the school's wonderful hexagonal wooden 'outdoor classroom' next to the nature garden, where the plentiful bumble bees were constantly buzzing about, the location was ideal. My only issue was the wind, which in fact, proved an amusing distraction for the children trying to catch the posters as they flew off the sides of the wooden structure where they had been carefully displayed with the help of Blu tack!

The children and staff were fascinated by my talk and enjoyed the outdoor 'nectar and pollen' activity. As usual, the children's questions showed interest and maturity and I was very touched that one 11 year old girl, obviously with an excellent memory, remembered a lot of the details about the talk that I gave to her class in 2018!





On Wednesday 29th June I was invited back to St. Margaret's CE Primary School, Ifield, to talk to two Year 3 classes. This is the school where I taught for 16 years between 1989 – 2005. It felt rather odd giving my bee talks in the hall which had been the place where many assemblies had taken place, as well as countless PE lessons. I was constantly wondering if any of the children were in fact, the offspring of those children I taught many years ago!

In the event, my bee talks were very well received with the teacher assistant trying very hard to make sure that all my facts and figures were carefully written down and explained; I only hope that they were correct! Unfortunately, the weather was not good, so we had to do the 'nectar and pollen' activity in the hall being closely watched by the dinner ladies who were ready to wheel in their trolleys full of tasty lunches.

Again, some of the children's questions really made me think very quickly on the spot, including one question about bees' eyes and the direction that they can see. It always amazes me how relevant and perceptive their questions are!





*Photos courtesy of St Margaret's School*



The following day on Thursday 30th June I visited All Saints CE Primary School, Horsham for two talks. I had previously been to the school in 2019, when I talked to the reception class, (4-5 year olds) and Year 3 children. This time it involved the older children Year 5 (9-10 year olds) and Year 6 (10-11 year olds). The main topic was asexual reproduction rather than bees and pollination. Interestingly, although most of the children in Year 6 must have 'heard' my talk in 2019, I obviously gave a longer talk this time with more explanation and I was pleased that the interest was still high, although one boy with additional needs said, "Oh No! Not another sex talk!"

The school has a lovely nature garden which was a good backdrop for the outdoor 'nectar and pollen' activity, and there were a lot of questions as usual at the end, including ones about the relative pain caused by bee or hornet stings. Again, as happens at all the bee talks I deliver, the children are really keen to share their increasing knowledge about the subject from their own experience and the knowledge which they have picked up from books or the internet. This was apparent and made more interesting when one of the children announced she had two hives in her garden, which came about because of a split, following her father's artificial swarm control!

In conclusion, I have very much enjoyed giving the bee talks this year and it is very exciting to see how schools are developing the children's interest in the natural world, often by the provision and development of nature gardens where the children can observe bee and other insect pollination in action. I feel sure that we do not need to worry about the future of bees if the children's fascination with nature can be continually and carefully nurtured in this way!



## EVENTS

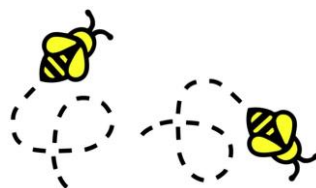
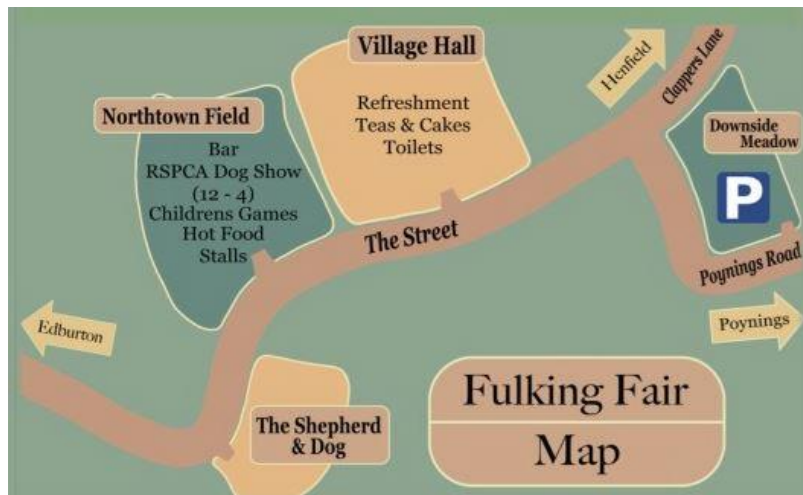
### 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (Sunday) – Fulking Fair

We will again be hosting a Honey Pitch at the Fulking Fair this year.

**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 - you never know you may be able to recruit someone to join CSBKA and will be best placed to share what it has been like for a newer member. Morning/afternoon/a couple of hours is fine and lets the others on the stall have an opportunity to look around – please contact Pip Edcombe at [csbkamembership@gmail.com](mailto:csbkamembership@gmail.com) with Fulking Fair 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 also at the end of the day to take everything down (approx. 5.00pm/6.00pm).

The Fair is held on the North Town Field, Fulking from noon until 5pm.



## 17<sup>th</sup> September (Saturday) – West Grinstead & District, Ploughing Match & Show

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

### Volunteers are again needed to help during the day PLEASE!

As before, 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](mailto: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.



## 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> 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.



## 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October - 91<sup>st</sup> 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 John and Diana Sharp!

A fantastic promotion for CSBKA was set up by John and Diana at their beautiful home and garden in Henfield as part of the Henfield Garden and Arts Weekend which took place in June. The event is exceptionally well organised with free entry to all gardens where some owners promoted their favourite charities, organised musical entertainment or displayed works from local artists. John and Diana created an informative static display on the craft of beekeeping (no live bees!) and also managed to raise some funds from honey sales for CSBKA.



### Location for Hive/s available in Horsham

Garden site available with access via a pedestrian gate in Hurst Avenue within an area which has been left to nature. There is a pond and fruit trees close by.

Please contact Frances Fry the owner direct at [fify@btopenworld.com](mailto:fify@btopenworld.com) if you are interested in this opportunity.

