



Southampton & District Bee Keepers Association

July 2009 *Foragings* Newsletter

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Contributors this month

Peter Clay

Doug Lumley

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Dates for the Diary

Sunday, 12th July, 14.00

Broadlands Apiary, Romsey

Apiary Meeting

Supering up the hives, drone Brood culling, re-queening a colony/uniting a nuke to a colony. Finding and marking new queens. Rearranging frames in the supers to get the maximum capped honey in each box.

Tuesday, 28th to Thursday 30th July

New forest Show

If you enter 6 items in to the honey show you get a free 1 day entry ticket. Deadline for entries is **16th July**. For More details contact Mark or Andy (023) 8032 7686 or email

newsletter@southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk

Sunday, 2nd August, 14.00

Broadlands Apiary, Romsey

Apiary Meeting

Honey harvesting

Saturday, 8th August, 15:00 (food at 17.00)

Wendy's House, Thistledown, Mill Lane, Nursling

Bar-B-Cue

Spend a pleasant afternoon beside the River Test catching up or meeting other members of the association in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. The more adventurous of us can take a stroll down the lane and see the Associations new apiary.

PESTS & DISEASE

In line with the CSL guidelines the Varroa count for July

Level and Control Required	Average Mite Drop per Day	Proportion of Infested Drone Pupae
Low No Action	1 or less	Less than 1 in 30
Medium Plan Action	Between 1 and 7	Between 1 in 30 And 1 in 15
High Take Action	More than 7	More than 1 in 15

Receiving a swarm 16/06/2009

By Peter Clay

It thought that I had prepared myself well for the big day. It began at the end of 2008 when I applied to go on a course at Eastleigh College and in February started an evening course with five evenings studying the theory of Bee Keeping and then a practical afternoon at Richard's Apiary. I also started reading a bee keeping book. Then I attended three Broadlands Apiary meetings with the very skilled Andy. At the last of these David advised me that my name had come to the top of the swarm list and to expect a swarm imminently.

On Tuesday afternoon I got the call and a couple of hours later I picked up the swarm box from David's home. I discussed the best way to get them in the hive and I decided on the plan to run them up a board on a white sheet rather than toss them in the top! David also advised that this was a swarm that had happened the previous Sunday so they might need feeding as it was now two days later.

As soon as I got home I prepared the feed and got the protective kit ready. I laid a board with a white sheet leaning against the hive running up to the entrance. With my children in the background, taking

pictures and laughing at their crazy looking Dad. I opened the swarm box and tipped it onto the sheet. A bit later I tipped the remaining bees out of the box. And yes there was a surge of enthusiastic bees heading up the white slope towards the entrance of the hive.

I was feeling quite pleased with myself as had seen Andy do the same thing - making it look pretty simple. But when he did it the bees went into the hive, my bees went straight past the entrance, and up the outside of the hive, till it was covered with bees, three deep. This was not meant to happen. I opened up the entrance a bit to see if this would help but nothing changed.

I sat there watching for about forty five minutes and then suddenly spotted the Queen moving about amongst the swarm on the side of the hive. I quickly went to the shed and got my bee clip to try and catch her. But when I got back she couldn't be seen. Then eventually she appeared again from under some other bees. She was quite large and slightly orange in colour. I grabbed her with a number of others bees and then placed the clip at the entrance of the hive and in she went.

I now thought that the other bees would follow - but they didn't. They were still covering the side of the hive and part of the roof. After another 20 minutes I decided to lift the roof and shake the bees in. I did this and some went in, but I had now been at this two hours and it appeared that most of the bees were still on the side of the hive. I was wondering what to do next when I spotted the Queen, who briefly came out of the entrance, waggled a bit and then went back inside. It was as if she was saying 'come on girls'. I decided to take a break and come back later. Another hour on and the hive was still covered with bees. I called David and asked his advice. He suggested using a dustpan and brush and moving them back down to the sheet ramp. This I did and it worked well. About 45 minutes later most bees were in the hive just as it was getting dark.

Next morning all seemed normal and bees were coming and going so at least I have kept them happy overnight. I realise now that with bees you can learn all the best ways to do things but it doesn't always go to plan. But I am looking forward to an interesting relationship with them in the future.

S&DBKA Annual Honey Show *Saturday, 15th August 2009*

If you haven't received the entry form and show schedule yet, contact Tony Mabey for a copy. Tony can be reached by phone on, 07810 528201 or email showsecretary@southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk

Bee Basic Exam

By Douglas Lumley

I am at that point of life where I don't plan on spending time studying to gain qualifications, you may, or may not have also reached that point. The point when you say, NO MORE.

But recently I found myself sitting with an examiner, at his Apiary, doing my Basic Beekeeping Exam.

So why do the exam? Hobbies are supposed to be fun, you don't need to qualify to do a hobby, do you? Well, some you do, some you don't, true, you don't need to be qualified to be a Beekeeper. If you just want to know the basics, there are lots of practical courses/evening classes to go on, you can join your local association and attend Apiary meetings. There is 'Mr.Hooper' and associates to read. Friendly beekeepers will always give you advice, even mentor you, however, I think it's a confidence thing.

Anyone can buy a suit, hive tool, smoker and all of the other recommended accoutrements, put bees in a hive, chuck some supers on and hope for the best, if they are lucky, they may not be disappointed the first year, but there will come a time when they go to the hive and find the Bees gone, or worse still, dead.

It struck me just before I started doing the exam, this would be the first time I had ever manipulated a hive in front of a stranger, whenever Andy comes over to my hives, I always let him do all the work, he is so good at it.

Anyway, I found myself on Saturday 30th of May, sitting in a lovely garden west of Romsey, full of information about how long it took

brood to mature, how to diagnose diseases, how to prevent swarms (ha), how to collect samples of Bees in a matchbox (courtesy of Andy) and much much more.

My exam time was 9.15 in the morning, strange, I have never gone into a hive at that time before, I was therefore a little concerned about how the Bees would react. Of course, rather than a colony of Bees rubbing there eyes and saying 'Saturday Morning, what time do you call this?' they had been up and working for hours, so no difficulty there.

Prior to the practical part of the exam, I had sat with John for about 35 minutes doing the 'theory' part. We did this in a relaxed way, sitting having a cup of coffee in the garden, talking and answering the questions John put to me. We then moved on to the practical side, John offered several hives for me to inspect, I chose one, then started the process of going through the chosen hive. The top super had a Queen rearing box in, the second super had some activity going on, with the Bees just drawing wax, I was then into the brood box. This was a large colony, but they were still drawing a couple of frames of foundation and to my surprise, I spotted the Queen on an almost drawn frame with just a few Bees on - that was lucky. I was able to point out all of the developmental stages of the brood from a couple of frames, Drone and Worker cells and even a couple of cells with chalk brood. I then put the hive back together. I answered a few more questions as we walked back from the hives, then John said the exam was over, what a relief!

I had a lovely time doing my exam, it was beautiful day, the sun was shining, I was in a beautiful part of Hampshire and I met up with a Beekeeper I did not know. He was obviously very knowledgeable about Bees. It was interesting to see his Apiary, how it was set up, talk about the varying problems we have both had throughout the year. It was also interesting, if a little daunting, to manipulate another persons hive whilst they were standing there judging your work.

Yes, doing the exam means you will have to do some study, but that just means you will be a better Beekeeper, thus, both you and your bees will reap the benefit. You will gain greater insight into these fascinating little creature that play such an important part in our lives - I think we all love our Bees, we all want to do the best we can for them, if not, why are we keeping Bees in the first place? it's certainly not for profit. Once you start to study for the exam, you may be surprised at how much you already know.

We owe it to the Bees to be the best Beekeeper we can be.

Just in case you are wondering, I passed.

Ed Note.

Congratulation Doug, and only been keeping bees for 12 months.

If any one else is interested in gaining there basic beekeeping certificate., at the end of July/start of August exams will be held at the Broadlands Apiary

More details can be obtained from Graham Watson, Education Secretary. (023) 8087 1756 or by email ampman@supanet.com

Summer BBQ

Saturday 8th August, 15.00hrs (food served at 17.00hrs)

£10.00, dietary requirements catered for.

This year Wendy has offered to host the bbq for the association at her picturesque home alongside the river test in Nursling.

If you wish to join us then contact Diane Burrows on (023) 8022 1840 or email at secretary@southamptonbeekeepers.co.uk by the 30th July 2009

The Honey flows on - Are you ready?

For those lucky people who have strong queen right colonies, the strongest honey flow so far this millennium has started in the last week of June.

The recent warm/hot humid weather has coincided with the flowering of the Lime trees, blackberries, clover and sweet Chestnuts. By some wonderful fluke the weather patterns have favoured all 4 of the major nectar plants in our area. Nectar is pouring into the

hives on all the sites. Even Nuc and queenless stocks are becoming choked with nectar.

The strongest hives are drawing and filling a super in less than a week. Members who are not used to such conditions could easily be caught out. Ensure you have supers to hand, fitted with foundation/drawn comb. These should be put on the hives when bees are occupying $\frac{3}{4}$ of the top box.

If you don't have jars ready, I suggest you order soon, as I'm sure there will be a run on them in a month's time when people start extracting.

If you only have small stocks of bees, while these may not make a crop of honey for you, they will build up nicely and should go into the winter in good condition and require little Autumn feeding.

Recession - Not in beekeeping

By Andy Willis

While most industries and businesses continue to struggle, beekeeping is booming. Thornes staff at Wragby have been doing 3 hours overtime per day for months just to keep up with demand. Despite all this extra production there is now a waiting list for new hives, boxes and foundation.

Our own membership numbers continue to grow month by month with currently 53 registered mem-

bers, nearly 2 times as many as we had just 3 years ago.

Honey prices continue to rise as well. The New Forest show prices for honey this year are £4.50 a 1 lb and £3.00 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb for blossom honey and the Heather honey is at £6.00 a lb and £4.00 for a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb jar.

Bees were fetching record high prices at the Meon Valley bee auction in early may with hives of bees

fetching £300.00 and a travel box of ten frames of bees/brood reaching £340.00

Bees and beekeeping continue to be in the news and the topic of conversation with the general public. There has never been a better time to be involved with beekeeping.

Garden Site

by Douglas Lumley

You may remember, back in mid April, Diane sent out an Email to say a person in Chandlers Ford, was offering a site for a Beehive in his garden. I thought I would give everyone an update on what happened, regarding the offer.

I contacted Tim, the person who had made the offer, it transpired he lived just down the road from us, so I duly arranged to go round and visit him. He and his family live in a detached house in a lovely, leafy, well established suburb of Chandlers Ford. The area offers loads of forage for Bees, both in his and his neighbours gardens, along with some local coppiced woodland nearby.

After discussing the risks, insurance, affects on his gardening practice, neighbours, my access to his garden etc. we agreed a site. Tim confirmed, he would place a large paving slab on the ground

and then await the arrival of some bees.

On Sunday 14th of June, I placed a brood box in the garden, along with a swarm I had gathered the previous evening from Woodside Allotments, in Eastleigh.

Tim and his family are very environmentally aware, his garden and those of his neighbours are very 'Bee friendly' and on my subsequent visit to Tim, it was obvious he was fascinated by the Bees and had been spending a lot of his time observing them from a distance.

It will be interesting to see how well these 'Urban Bees' do, compared to my 'Rural Bees'. I have informed Tim, a swarm at this time of year is unlikely to produce Honey this year, but, if they make it through the winter, it will allow me to do a comparison next year. I will, of course, be feeding the colony regularly.

Because, I don't have hives in my garden, it has always 'bugged' me that all of my 'Bee friendly' plants are of no benefit to my Bees - at least now, when I am watching the Bees working my garden, I can think, they could be my Bees.

This positive experience caused me to think, there must be more people like Tim and his family out there - how do we reach them? Could we do some sort of advertisement campaign, or at least include the opportunity to foster a 'Hive in your Garden' when doing our usual work on raising awareness? If we did this, would other members be interested in this?

Addendum: Doug went up to check the hive, the Bees have drawn 3 frames of comb and the queen has successfully mated and is now laying eggs.