



2017 Bee Market & Auction

This year's Bee Market & Auction at Brinsbury was again a resounding success - and the sun shone down on us for once! All but seven of the 303 Lots originally registered sold and vendors and buyers appeared very satisfied with the prices paid.

A large team from all four Divisions managed the day. Lot Stewards accepted and despatched the Lots. The Auctioneer, Roger Patterson, the only member to have attended every event since 1976, sold the Lots in under 4 hours with his band of Ring Stewards & Runners.

The office team managed Paddle registration and the finances following the sales. All were kept fed and watered by the Refreshments and Cake Stall teams. And when time was needed away from the Auction Ring there was the Tombola and tomato plants or a host of other donated plants to select for the coming growing season.

'Bee Cosmetics' represented by Derek Ready were on hand as was Diane Steele, the region's Seasonal Bee Inspector.

And if you were outbid in the Ring or couldn't find what you wanted then Paul Payne from 'Paynes Southdown Bee Farms' had a huge selection available for sale from their shop in Hassocks.

A huge **THANK YOU** to all those members who gave so generously of their time. Let's look forward to doing it all again next year!

Graham

Secretary West Sussex BKA

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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All photographs courtesy of Chrissy Blakeman

Around the Divisions

All Members are welcome to attend any Divisional meeting, but please advise the organiser if you plan to attend.

Central Sussex Division

Saturday 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th May - Apiary meetings and BuZZ Club at Pease Pottage starting at 9:30am.

Further details from Debbie Rowland: chairman@centralsussexbka.org.uk or website: www.centralsussexbka.org.uk

Chichester Division

Tuesday 9th May - 'Swarming' - Dick Bowyer & Graham Priestly on preventing and dealing with swarms. The Fishbourne Centre, Blackboy Lane, Fishbourne, Chichester, PO18 8BE at 7:30pm.

Further details from: secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

***'Share your Division's
activities with readers of the
County News'***

Wisborough Green Division

Saturday 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th May - Meetings at the teaching apiary from 1:30pm.

Wednesday 3rd & 24th May - Meetings at the teaching apiary from 6pm.

Further details from Sue Elliott: secretary@wgbka.org.uk or website: www.wgbka.org.uk

Worthing Division

Saturday 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th* May - Meeting at the teaching apiary from 2pm (*1pm on 27th)

Further details from Len Lewis: secretary@worthingbeekeepers.org.uk or the Division's website: www.worthingbeekeepers.org.uk



... and Dates for your Diary

Saturday 6th May - Meon Valley Beekeepers' 38th Annual Auction Sale. From 11:30am at Greatham Village Hall, Liss, Petersfield, GU33 6AD. Full details on the Association's website: <http://meonvalleybeekeepers.com>

Saturday 20th May - Sussex Festival of Beekeeping. Heathfield Community College, School Hill, Old Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8RJ. See article in this newsletter.

Sunday 21st May - Brinsbury Country Fayre. Come along and see the Wisborough Green bees on display. Full details on the College website <https://chichester.ac.uk/brinsbury-show>

Thursday 8th - Saturday 10th June - South of England Show, including the very popular Bees & Honey Show. Ardingly Show-ground near Haywards Heath. See article in the March newsletter.



Melvyn's Missive

Chairman, Melvyn Essen, writes for the County News



First of all the Jamie Ellis lecture in Petworth was really special. The subject was 'The Anatomy of the Honeybee', perhaps that doesn't sound very exiting but Jamie captivates the audience with his knowledge and his southern United States fast drawl. If he had the usual slow southern drawl it would have taken twice as long! The images were stunning, Jamie said the images in most anatomy books are not good so he makes sure the images he uses are the best.

Due to a shortage of weekends in April I was helping with the Central Sussex Introductory Course on the 22nd April - Auction day! The plants I had grown for sale on Sue Cooper's Plant Stall were in attendance though and delivered by 7am that morning. Marilyn my wife was selling cakes with Debra all day with barely a break, after having a baking session together the day before. I was surprised to see the Auction had finished when I showed up and any cakes that were not sold were packed away! The Auction finance team I could see were still busy finishing off. **Thanks to all those who helped to make it one of the most successful auctions in the south.**

Well the silly season has started with some swarm calls already! Not many Bumblebee calls yet, only one I think with bees in a bird's nesting box - the usual thing. The first colony we showed at our Introductory Course had produced some queen cells, so we found the queen and put her safe for later. The last of the three shifts of students had a bonus to see the first part of an artificial swarm. Two of my eight, or is it nine now, colonies have produced some queen cells too, so be careful out there!

Melvyn

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Sussex Bee Festival - Saturday 20th May



Sussex Beekeepers' Association is holding its annual Bee Festival on **Saturday 20th May** at Heathfield Community College, School Hill, Old Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8RJ.

The Festival offers a bee-autiful day out for all the family! Free parking, Bee demonstrations, Trade stands, Auction and a lot more from 10am to 5pm. Hot and cold food will be available, Plants and honey for sale, Workshops, Children's corner, Mead making and Bee talks.

Entry is just £1.

For full details visit the Association's website at:
www.sussexbeefestival.org.uk



Countdown to a Swarm!

This article is reproduced courtesy of Reigate Beekeepers Association via ebees. The original article was inspired by and based on a Surrey BKA talk by Dan Basterfield.

We are now in the ‘swarming season’, and we as beekeepers need to be prepared. But our bees have also been preparing - perhaps to swarm. So what is their countdown to a swarm ?

Swarm Days	Bee Activity
-28 to -14	Queen Cups Built in Quantity
-28 to -14	Queen Feeding Increased
Laying Rate Increases	
-10	Egg Laid in Cup
-10	Workers Gorge on Honey
-7	Queen Feeding Reduced
Laying Rate Reduces	
-5	Workers Rest in Hive
-3	Scouting Begins
-3	Queen Treated Roughly
-1	Queen Cell Sealed
0	Buzzing Runs
0	Prime Swarm Departs
0	Swarm Clusters (often nearby)
0	Some ‘Returners’ to the Hive
0 to ?	Swarm Collectors Arrive !!!

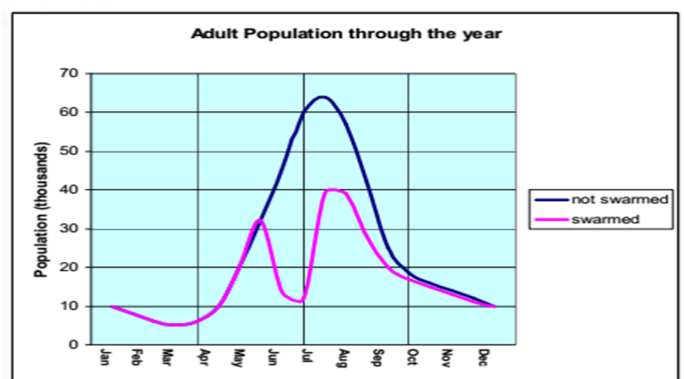


outside of the cavity they make scurrying and slow flights around, sometimes landing and walking on the outside surface.

They return to the original hive and dance to give information about the possible new nest, and to recruit supporters for this new location. Their dance tells the other bees where the new nest is located, how far away and in what direction, and describes the cavity. The decision about a new nest location may take up to

The days in the table are average time scales only, and the earlier activities are subject to greater variance in timing. But they do indicate that a lot of activity is taking place within the hive, and for a long time before the swarm emerges from the hive. A prime swarm usually means that around 60% of the adult population of the hive leave, possibly up to 30,000 bees - and of these bees, 70% may be under nine days old.

This departure of a large majority of the bees has a significant effect on the colony throughout the year as illustrated by the graphs below.



Scouting for a new nest location starts around three days before the swarm emerges. Older bees abandon their foraging duties and begin scouting. A likely cavity location is inspected for up to an hour. Initially the bee spends around a minute inside the cavity, alternating with trips outside. They scramble all over the inside, walking all the surfaces, measuring the size of the cavity as they successively venture further inside. When inspecting the

four days, and may not have been finalised when the swarm leaves the hive. The swarm tends to go through a few different phases whilst it finds a new home. The queen is often forced out of the hive by the workers, who guide her to an appropriate local resting place such as a nearby fence post, tree or hedge. The workers and drones follow the pheromones of the queen and the swarm undergoes a period of settling with more bees joining from the original colony. Lots of bees will be flying for some time while the swarm clusters around the queen.



After the prime swarm has left the hive further departures of bees may occur, and these are known as ‘Casts’. They involve a virgin queen, unlike a prime swarm which involves the original old queen. Following a prime swarm brood development continues, and the sealed queen cells start to hatch in around 5 - 6 days. The workers keep emerging queens in their cells, but after the first virgin is released she may depart with a cast after 2 - 4 days.

Further virgin queens can also depart with more casts, and this may continue until the colony is totally depleted, down to 10 - 25% of the number of bees it originally started with.

The following table shows the activities that occur after a prime swarm.

Swarm Days	Bee Activity
0	Prime Swarm Departs
+5	Virgin Queens in Cells
+5	First Virgin Queen Emerges
+5	Workers Delay Further Queens Emerging
+8	Cast Swarm may Depart
+8	Another Virgin Queen Emerges
+8	Virgin Attacks Queen Cells
	Workers Tear Down Queen Cells
+11 to +20	Virgin Leaves on Mating Flights
+26	Mated Queen Starts Laying

The days in the table are average time scales only, and the later activities are subject to greater variance in timing. Cast swarms may of course not occur at all.

When a prime swarm leaves to fly to a new nest it carries enough reserves to build 800 sq. cm of comb area, which is about 3% of the total brood area required. Around 90% of this required brood area is constructed within six weeks. This requires 9 - 11 kg of honey which is equivalent to around a third of a colony’s total winter stores.

The survival rates for swarms are not high, only one in four generally survive. (And the rate is much lower for cast swarms because they are much smaller and don’t have the necessary reserves to build the initial comb.)

The survival of a swarm is highly weather dependant, and particularly dependant on their ability to forage enough to be able to build the required comb, and of course requires that they have made a good decision about their new nest location.

... and finally

New Regional Bee Inspector

Sandra Gray has been appointed as the new Regional Bee Inspector for the South East region.

To contact Sandra e-mail: sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk or telephone: 07775 119430.

Diane Steele is now the Seasonal Bee Inspector for the region.
E-mail: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk or telephone: 07775 119452



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

www.nationalbeeunit.com/

We're on the web:
www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters or our facebook page please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, *no later than the 20th of the preceding month.*
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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Previous newsletters from the last 12 months are available on the website.

