



Registered Charity No. 1121231

June 2021

Newsletter

Editors Gwyn Marsh and Dorothea Jones

Apideas Their operation and maintenance Keith Pierce

Keith Pierce, a beekeeper for over 30 years, breeds dark native Irish bees at his apiary near Dublin. He uses apideas and now achieves an 80% success rate.



Preparation is the key. Fixing at least 1 inch of foundation to the frames, ensuring the door is closed and having several ready for immediate use ensures you are ready to go at a moment's notice. Keith uses sugar syrup rather than fondant in the apidae feeder, since this allows the bees to draw wax more quickly. Always keep the feeder topped up.

To populate the apidea, always use bees from super frames. The older bees will fly off and younger bees live longer. If there are few bees on the super, the hive is not strong enough and should not be used. Only use bees from a hive to populate one apidea, over stripping hives weakens them.

Lightly spray the frame with water and shake into a damp container. Collect about 300ml of damp bees. This equates to approximately 2/3 of a 500ml yogurt/cream container. Open the floor and shake the damp bees into the box. Keith puts in a virgin at this stage. A queen can be introduced, in a roller cage, through the hole in the plastic crown board. Close the floor and store in a cool dark place for 3-4 days.

Releasing the bees should be done a distance from the home apiary, there is a chance the bees will return to their original hive. Positioning in dappled sunlight is ideal. If more than one apidea is being sited, their entrances should face in different directions. Early morning or late evening are prime times for release.

Check on progress after a week. If necessary, feed with syrup - use small pieces of wood as floats. Check for eggs after 9-12 days. Once a good laying pattern is established, move to a nuc or hive.

Leave the apidea queenless for 24 hours, then use a roller cage to introduce a new queen and start the process again.

A snippet of beekeeping lore from Beulah

Beekeeper Beware

There was an old man of Lowness.

Whose bees were all in a mess.

They hadn't much brood

And even less food.

They died, so he diagnosed Stress.

Anon.

B J Sherriff

We all know the firm and most of us wear their suits. There are cheaper versions around but I recently found out why it's worth paying for the quality. Preparing to inspect the bees, smoker lit, kit assembled and hive tool at the ready I zipped up my suit. The hood zipper came off in my hand!!! I managed to fiddle a fix. Not really wanting to visit the bees with an inadequately secure suit, I contacted Sherriff.

No problem - send the suit and pay on completion. I resigned myself for a wait. Sent on Tuesday afternoon, returned on Friday morning - what service!! Not only had they fixed the zip (renewed it) they had replaced my thumb loops (a job I've been meaning to do for ages!!).

My suit has seen many years of use so the broken zip could be seen as reasonable wear and tear and therefore time to get a new one. Sherriff aim to repair their suits for as long as possible. With such prompt and efficient service - don't despair - get a repair! Many thanks to Angela and her team in Cornwall.

Flowering Now



Meadowsweet



Dead nettle



Don't know what this shrub is!



Plantain



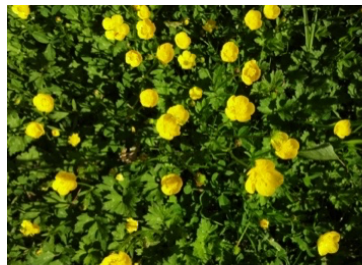
Comfrey



Chives



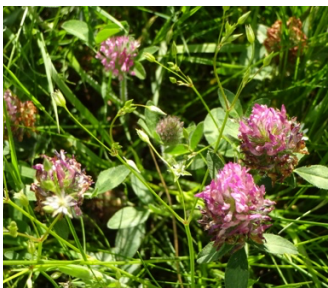
Poppy



Buttercups



Aquiliga



Red Clover



Stitchwort



Cistus

There are many more - bramble, gorse, holly, speedwell, dandelion for instance! I thought 1 page would be sufficient indication of the wealth of nectar and pollen available for our bees. And from some surprising sources! Bees have been seen on all of these - just not quick enough on the shutter!

On the other hand, the bees were so determined to collect the nectar from this unprepossessing plant I managed to snap several photos! It's not very clear on the photo but the nectar was glistening there was so much of it.



Postcode Groups

When Covid restrictions stopped gatherings a number of postcode groups were started to keep people in touch via Zoom. These informal groups offer an opportunity to talk bees (and more) with local members, an important part of belonging to a beekeeping community.

Groups are open to anyone in the postcode area. If your postcode isn't represented, email Helen Cave, to make arrangements to join a group close to you or arrange to start a new group.. All groups have at least one very experienced beekeeper amongst their number so any queries, difficulties and problems are sure to be answered and/or discussed!

SL9 - Mary Chris Stanton - holycrosssamson@yahoo.com

SL0 - Sue Williams - suew756@gmail.com

Eastern gp (Chorleywood area) Fiona Matheson - fiona.matheson.fm@gmail.com

HP7 - Jim Liness - apiary@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Ley Hill - Sarah Peterson - sarah.peterson@live.co.uk

HP8 - Gwyn Marsh - drgwynethmarsh@gmail.com

Helen Cave - New postcode group - membership@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Beekeeping Equipment

Since there is not going to be an auction this year, a for sale and wanted area has been created in the members area of the club website. There is guidance about how to add items to the site to sell/request equipment.

Further information, including contact details can be found on the “Items for Sale” members section part of the club website.

<https://www.chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk/items-for-sale>

Disease Concerns

Deborah Campbell, Master beekeeper, has trained as bee health inspector and is available to assist members with any concerns they may have identifying diseases in their hives. Her contact details have recently changed to

Bucks Bee Health Mentor

Deborah Campbell

beehealth@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Club Apiaries

Beginners Apiary

It has been a tricky year at the apiary so far due to the cold wet weather. Starvation has been an issue but the warmer weather has seen a big improvement.

A huge thank you to all the experienced beekeepers who have helped run the sessions.

22 people from the Beginners Course have attended the apiary. There have been 46 apiary training sessions. Beginners are starting to get delivery of Nucs

Jim Liness

Chesham Bois

After a freezing April, (this was the coldest and certainly the most frost in 60 years!) and the very wet May. The Chesham Apiary is now functioning as it should.

Whilst the four colonies came through winter in good condition, they failed to develop in the way it had been hoped to enable Queen Rearing.

However, we are now at a good point, where all the colonies have swelled. In consequence, prepping two colonies started last Thursday (3rd June) by feeding. It is planned to have another colony prepped Friday (11th June).

The first two colonies will enter their second stage of the Queen rearing process. This will leave one colony which it is hoped will be able to prep and develop in mid-June.

All the respondents to the Queen rearing course have been contacted and informed of the current position with a view to arranging dates to get as many of them to the Apiary.

On the housekeeping side, the Apiary remains good order. It was recently strimmed by cutting pathways, leaving the rest for the bees forage.

Alan Roberts

Committee News

Club meetings

Next Club Meeting - Saturday July 3 2021

Due to government announcement numbers are now limited to 30 people.

There are still spaces available: see below how to register.

The July meeting will be a picnic at the Beginners Apiary near Beaconsfield/Gerrards Cross. Arrival time is 2.30pm.

It's an ideal opportunity for new members to meet each other and other members of the club and for our zoom postcode groups to meet in person.

Bring your own picnic, refreshments and seating - a limited number of chairs will be available.

Please note: there is no running water at the apiary site. There is plenty of parking, and a toilet, approximately a 4-5-minute level walk from the picnic site. Follow the signs to the apiary.

For those of you who might find the walk a little too far, transport can be arranged from the car park to the picnic site. A limited number of chairs are available.

The apiary site itself is well contained within high bramble and gorse shrubs and there is plenty of space to picnic without being near bee hives or flight paths.

If anybody would like to visit the actual apiary, where there are a number of hives and nucs currently set up. Please bring your own bee suit.

Email Gillian chairman@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk to register for the event. Directions to the apiary will be circulated once it's known if the picnic can go ahead.

As numbers are now limited this will be on a 'first come first served' basis. We will confirm directions to the apiary once we are clear we can hold the event.

Chenies Manor Plant Fair Sunday July 18th 10 - 5pm

Chalfonts Beekeepers are fortunate enough to usually be allocated a stall at this prestigious local event. It appears that they are planning to go ahead this year and have asked us if we would bring along our stall again.

This is obviously dependent on any further government announcements

It will be a much-reduced event this year, with fewer stalls and a pre-booked ticket only event, with timed entry to restrict numbers.

Our stall relies very much on the help of our club members. We will need a number of volunteers on the day, to setup and dismantle the stall, sell honey, helping with the observation hive and chat to the public about bees and beekeeping.

New members are more than welcome. It is enormous fun and you'll be surprised how much you already know about bees once you start chatting!

You don't have to volunteer for the whole day, just an hour or two would be fantastic.

The stall will be run for both volunteers and the public with current Covid rules in place - whatever they are going to be! We hope that enough of you will feel confident enough to give us a helping hand.

We will also need honey to sell!!

This has been a very strange year so far, but hopefully some of you will have some honey to sell. We sell it on your behalf (price for this year yet to be decided). 10% goes to the club to provide and maintain all the facilities we enjoy as club members.

Emails will be sent out soon, but in the meantime, if you can offer assistance on the day or have honey that you wish to sell, please contact Dorothe Jones Events Secretary on events@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Diary Dates

July 19th
2-5 pm

Chenies Manor Plant Fair

July/August

No club meetings. Postcode Zoom meetings will probably continue.

September

We hope to be back in the hall but this obviously depends on government guidelines and St Joseph's.

Contacts

President Edward Townsend
president@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Chairman Gillian Jones
chairman@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Treasurer Jonathan Lee
treasurer@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Secretary Vacant
secretary@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Membership Helen Cave
membership@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Trading Mike Walters
trading@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Events Dorothe Jones
events@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Web Master Giles Kenwright
webmaster@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Library Jonathan Jones
library@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Honey Show Nick Grey
honeyshow@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Newsletter Gwyn Marsh
newsletter@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Education Steve Troll
education1@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Apiaries

Chesham Bois Alan Roberts
apiarych@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Beginners Apiary Jim Liness
apiary@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Bucks Bee Health Mentor
Deborah Campbell
beehealth@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk