



Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1121231

July 2021

Editors Gwyn Marsh and Dorothe Jones

Club Picnic

by

Dorothe Jones and Gillian Jones

Who could have imagined when Jim suggested to the committee in April, that he would like to host a picnic at the apiary in June that we would have to jump through so many hoops to make it happen? We all had in mind a 1950's style bucolic summer day, the sound of bees from the apiary buzzing in the distance, lush green grass to sit upon, sunshine and more importantly, lots of our members. However, because of the delay in opening up the country due to COVID, we were limited to a maximum of 30 people and our original date had to be changed because some of our members were taking the Basic Assessment on the original day.

Despite the forecast of thunder, lightning and heavy showers two days beforehand, it was decided to go ahead with the picnic. An email was despatched to all those who had put their name forward and details and directions were sent out.

So, on the first Saturday in July, despite the weather forecast, visitors to the apiary were greeted by friendly faces and sunshine. Jim and his willing band of helpers had made the apiary site absolutely lovely. Many thanks to Peter Bains for bringing up his mower to cut the long grass the previous week, giving everyone room to sit. So, there was plenty of seating and space for everyone. If restrictions had been lifted, we could easily have accommodated twice as many people.

Derek Jones and Peter Bains were on hand, greeting everybody as they arrived, showing them where to park their cars and even ferrying Mary Chris in regal fashion to the apiary site. It was obvious that everybody was delighted not only to be there but to see their friends who they had only been able to catch up with on the small screen for so many months. We were also delighted that some of our newer members came and joined the picnic.

People had made such a huge effort with their own picnics and delicious sandwiches, strawberries and cream and cold drinks flowed - some even in very smart wine glasses.

Jim was also delighted to be able to show some of our members around the site as they had come prepared with suits and boots. Even some hives were opened.

It was felt to be such a success that Jim is keen to host another one, hopefully open to more people, and will be seeing what dates might be available for us again this summer.



Flowering Now



Lime



Agrimony



Mallow



Scabious



Evening Primrose



Jasmine



Philadelphus



Mallow



Lavender

Bucks County Beekeepers

Adult Honey Bee Diseases and Pests Day 7th August 2021

Bucks County Beekeepers will once again be holding an adult bee disease day on Saturday 7th August at Butlers Cross Village Hall, HP17 0TX. The day has been split into 8 sessions for small groups of up to 12 Bucks Beekeepers, to learn about adult honey bee diseases and pests through mixture of lectures, demonstrations and hands on investigation.

The day will start in the hall with a lecture focussed on adult honey bee diseases and pests. There will then be 2 demonstrations, held outside that will cover:

- 1) Sterilization of hives, both wooden and poly
- 2) Comb change demos; shook swarm and various forms of Bailey comb change

There will also be the opportunity to have your bees tested for Nosema; bring along a sample of 30 abdomens of older bees from a hive and one of the county microscopists will test it for Nosema. Sean will be demonstrating how to take a sample of bees for testing during his live demo on Wednesday 21st July.

Finally, there will be a diseases quiz with a prize of a bottle of Champagne. Please book your session in advance on [eventbrite here](#), where there are further details about the sessions.

I can thoroughly recommend this event. It's an opportunity to see the types of diseases and their effects that might affect our hives. Fortunately, most of us will never see these in reality, but it is useful to know what to look for when you see something odd happening in the hive.

Live Hive Event 7.00pm 21st July 2021

Bucks County BKA is organising another live hive event with Sean Stephenson via Zoom.

Live Beekeeping Demonstration
Jul 21, 2021 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83932658318?pwd=aTJnU0VKNDhxUHdDS2thaTNR1Rydz09>

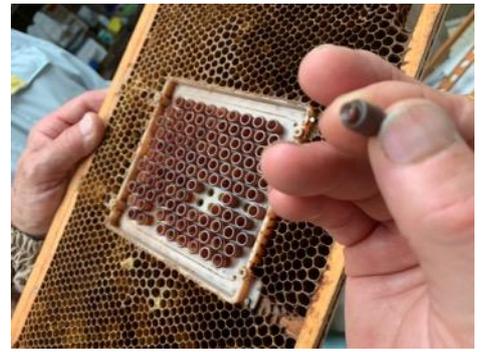
Previous inspections are available on the county [website here](#).

Queen Rearing at the Chesham Bois Apiary

From the Chesham Queens

by Fiona Matheson

A few of us gathered at the apiary to try out some queen rearing methods, ably led by Alan Roberts. Alan was using his 'Blue Peter method' and had already prepared a couple of hives of gentle and prolific bees ready for us.



The basis of any queen rearing relies on the principle that bees without a queen and with starting material of eggs and very young larvae will build their own new queen. The Vince Cook method (the book is in the library) is the rearing method we followed.



Queenless brood box with separate entrance

Eke and large contact feeder

Queen in brood box under Queen excluder

First, we went into our double brood hive and looked for a frame or two of starting material - very young larvae, just hatched from the egg, lying in the bottom of the cell, and just starting to make the C shape. We each tried a couple of different Grafting Tools; everyone was able to have several goes.



We had already made some wax cups (during a shower of rain, when we were confined to the shed), using our own hand made dowel dipped into molten beeswax, and affixed them with more molten wax to a bar on a frame. We put the frame with the wax cups and young larvae in middle of the bottom queenless box in a split hive. The bees will hopefully use these young larvae to start some queen cells.



Next using Alan's 'Blue Peter' principle, we used a Jenter cage, which he had already placed on a frame and into another hive.

The queen was trapped in the cage for 24 hours and had laid a lot of eggs into the plastic cups, which were now just at the right age to be transferred to the queenless box.

We carefully brushed the bees off the frame with some grass and then returned to the shed to move the cups from the Jenter cage into plastic holders and onto a bar frame.

The beauty of this method is that the larvae are all the right age and there is no need to touch the young larvae and possibly damage them. Then this frame was returned to another split hive in the bottom queenless box.

We all went away with much food for thought - and to prepare our apideas or mating nucs to receive some queen cells.

The Results



Grafting into wax cups success - only 2 out of 19 Queen cells



Jenter system success - 14 out of 18 Queen cells raised!

Clearly, we need more practice at grafting! Everyone was very pleased with their queen cells, taken away in apideas or ready to go into mating nucs at home.

Feedback from the group: Many thanks Alan, the 'Blue Peter' Method worked well, thanks for sharing your expertise and hard work; learnt loads today, better than any book! Great day and great company, many thanks;





Wax cups



Grafting tools



Looking for eggs and small larvae



Grafting



Brushing off the bees



The Jenter cups



Relative success rates

Committee News

by Dorothe Jones

Honey Show

Our Club Honey Show which was to take place at Chalfont St Giles Show on September 4th has been cancelled by the show organisers.

However, the Bucks County Honey Show, which our members can enter, will be taking place on Sunday 26th September.

Organised this year by North Bucks Beekeepers. Details to follow.

Secretary Post

Sadly, this position on our committee is still vacant after 8 months.

It is not an arduous job, requiring preparation of the monthly agendas, taking and distribution of minutes and dealing with correspondence (emails) with the help of other committee members. A few hours a month is all that is required. Extensive knowledge or experience of beekeeping is not a pre-requisite. Beginners are welcome on the committee. Enthusiasm and commitment are more important.

Gillian Jones has been doing both Chairman and Secretary's roles since November. Clearly this is not ideal for the club as we need to have a full complement on the committee, or for Gillian herself.

If you feel you can offer some of your time to help in smooth running of your club, then please get in touch with Gillian to find out more: chairman@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Restore Hope

“Restore Hope is a charity supporting local vulnerable children, young people and families. We are planning two weeks of summer events to provide a 'holiday at home' for the families we are supporting through FoodLife, a crisis food programme we began in May 2020 in response to the pandemic, together with local families in receipt of free school meals.”

The Charity is running this event near Latimer in the summer holidays.

Tues-Thursday 3-5th August and 10th-12th August 10.00am-4.30pm

Chalfonts Beekeepers have been asked if we would like to provide an educational stand about honey bees and beekeeping for the children. This would be for half-1 day (depending on support) each week. We don't know yet which day this would be. The event will be outdoors.

We have a variety of educational materials available including our observation hive with live bees. How much we can bring to the event very much depends on how much help we can muster from you good people!

If you feel you could turn up for an hour or two or more on either of the weeks (day to be confirmed) to help educate young people about bees then please contact Dorothe Jones events@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Vacancy for a Regional Bee Inspector

The National Bee Unit has a vacancy for a Regional Bee Inspector (RBI) and is seeking candidates across Central England comprising of Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorset Regions.

If you are interested in applying for these jobs, please follow this [link](#)

Job Reference: 130382

Closing Date is 11:55pm on Sunday 25th July 2021

If you have any questions regarding these positions, please contact Julian Parker julian.parker@apha.gov.uk 07775 119469 or Cristina Ruiz (National Bee Inspector) – 07976242798 / Cristina.Ruiz@apha.gov.uk.

Beaconsfield (formerly Beginners/Training) Apiary Report

A number of the new beekeepers have now got their own bees and will hopefully be able to put into practice all that they have learned from their visits to the Apiary and the Beginners Course.

This is just the start of the process to becoming a proficient beekeeper as there is always something new to learn.

This month at the apiary we encountered a number of situations and the students and the apiary team had a great time finding and executing solutions. The things we encountered included swarm control, uniting colonies, splitting colonies, replacing/finding/ marking and clipping queens and managing queen cells. The training apiary is a good place to learn - we always have a plan, but also expect the unexpected. Bees will be bees and they don't often read the same books as us.

- Thank you to Sean and Jenny for testing the Basic Assessment candidates, the day went well, and we hope all of the candidates passed.
- The picnic was a success, the rain held off and it was sunny at times. We inspected the Top Bar Hive for a couple of people to see inside.
- The poor weather has restricted the gathering of nectar but there is still time yet, all digits crossed for a dry and warm period in July and August.
- Jim and Gillian are working together to increase the team of people who come to the apiary to assist the Apiary team but also to learn. All members are welcome to attend this apiary and are asked to contact Jim directly on apiary@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk to book a slot to visit.

Chesham Bois Apiary

The apiary is in good condition with strimming and housekeeping carried out.

As we are all aware the weather has not been kind to beekeepers so far this season. The bees have remained in good condition through the season so far and considerations are being made for varroa treatments towards the end of the season.

Alan is very pleased to report that a Queen rearing course was held on the weekend of 10th July. We had five participants from the club. The methods employed were very “Blue Peter” in that work was prepared eight days before hand to enable the members to gain maximum benefit from the course.

The members had first-hand experience of preparing wax cups and grafting very small larvae into them. The extension of the course was based around the Jenter Queen Cup system of Queen cell production. A “WhatsApp” group has been created to communicate the progress of both Queen production systems - which should start seeing results as from Wednesday 14th July.

There is a possibility that a further Queen Rearing course could be run this year as the demand is certainly apparent. Alan will be limiting the numbers on the course to six. Anyone interested in attending a course should contact Alan directly on apiarych@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Diary Dates

26th September 2021

Bucks County Honey Show

Details to follow.

There will be no Newsletter in August.

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