

Sept/October 2014

Wealden Apiarist

Newsletter of the High Weald Division of the Sussex Beekeeping Association

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EDITORS BUZZ....

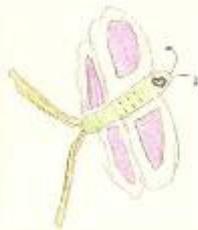
Now that most of us will have gathered our honey harvests and the bees hopefully recovered from being robbed, it's time to attack the varoa. I've been treating with 'Hive Clean' with some success this year, but I've noticed that one colony has suddenly increased the number of varoa present, so have decided to treat with Apilife Var, the biscuit like strips that are put in place at the corners of the uppermost part of the hive. As I've left a super on the colony for them to fill with stores, I had to remind myself whether to place the treatment directly above the brood box, or on the very top above the super and beneath the crown board. I decided to ask Paines and the advice was to put it at the very top and let the vapours soak down through the whole structure. This I've done, putting a varoa board in the bottom to monitor the mite drop. I think I've been lucky this year in not having a very high count, but one should never relax and the situation can change very rapidly, as I've found. As always, prevention is better than cure.

John Lyte

High Weald Beekeepers Events Diary

Date	Event	Address
Saturday 6 th September	Apiary Visit Those interested please confirm by email to Rose Marie rose_marie_riley@hotmail.com	Sandra Puckett Old Birchden Farm Forge Road Groombridge TN3 9PJ Time to be confirmed
Thursday 11 th Sept	Bee Banter	White Hart Crowborough
Tuesday 30 th September	Bee Banter	Rose & Crown Mayfield
Thursday 9 th October	Bee Banter	White Hart Crowborough
Tuesday 28 th October	Bee Banter	Rose & Crown Mayfield

Meadows in the Weald



To celebrate

Meadows in the Weald

Saturday 20th September 2014
2pm to 4pm on Rotherfield Millennium Green



Why not bring a picnic and enjoy a family afternoon, all welcome.
Enquiries: 01825 891094



PRESS RELEASE

Rotherfield goes wild!

An open day to celebrate the Heritage Lottery funded project, Meadows in the Weald, on Saturday 20th September 2014 promises to give visitors a chance to enjoy a range of nature-based activities on Rotherfield Millennium Green between 2pm and 4pm.

The Meadows in the Weald project has been working with 32 children from Rotherfield Primary School and volunteers from the local community to research the history of the Green and learn more about farming in the Weald. So far, participants have enjoyed a trip to the Beech Estate to see one of the South's largest expanses of wild flower meadows, taken part in research and oral history sessions, visited the records office at the Keep to view ancient maps and uncover information about the Green and Rotherfield village.

Project organisers would now like to share what they have learnt with the community at an open day which showcases wildlife organisations, conservation groups, and rural crafts and offers guided tours of the Green. Amongst those taking part are Wildlife A & E, High Weald Beekeepers, Argos Hill Windmill, a bat rescue group, and the Powdermill Trust. Activities on offer include seeing/handling wild creatures close up, trying your hand at willow weaving, pond dipping, identifying different species of moths and even taking the reins of traditional working shire horses. All are welcome, entry is free and includes a presentation from Rotherfield School children about their participation in the project.

Ahead of the Open Day there's an opportunity for volunteers to participate in introductory work party sessions to learn about conservation work. Anyone over the age of 18 can join a friendly group of volunteers from the Millennium Green Trust on Sunday 7th September (or 5th October) between 10am and 12 noon to help with tasks such as clearing bulrushes from the pond, hedge cutting, repairs to the boardwalk and preparing for wild flower planting. Old clothing is required but tools and training will be provided. For more information, or to express an interest in helping, please phone Richard Mann on 01892 852470. Later in the year volunteers will get the chance to join a willow weaving workshop to produce a living willow structure on the Green.

For more information about the Open Day, please call Ruth Maddison on 07508 277371.

Apiary site offer

We've recently received a very kind offer from Wendy Scrace, who owns 18 acres in High Hurstwood, which has over 3000 apple trees. She invites a High Weald Association beekeeper to keep their bees there for pollination purposes.

If you are interested, please contact Wendy directly on 01892 662934 or email her at wendy.scrace@btinternet.com.

Appeal for a Queen

Hi Everyone - HELP needed

Do you have a nucleus or mated Queen on offer, as Roz has only one Queenless colony left.

Please respond to her directly - rozmillier@talktalk.net.

Apiary Visit

**Words and picture
Helen Hadley**

Witherenden Farm house Station Road Stonegate.

16th August.

6 of us met up near Stonegate at 2:15. Anne gave us a quick history of her WBC hives, (some of the equipment was her grandmothers and was in fantastic condition).

We assisted changing her floors from solid floors to open mesh, which is much easier with extra help. Bees looked extremely healthy. We viewed a bait hive which had been left out for several years with a few old combs. The bait hive was elevated on top of a dogs shipping crate and this year a swarm moved in.



Bees built beautiful wild comb before Anne realised they had moved in. A little reorganisation was required, a new open mesh floor, then a clean brood box of foundation and then the brood box of wild comb. We did not want to cut this wild comb and look for the queen, just in case we squashed the queen.

In the spring 2015 this can be cleaned out carefully.

Anne's tips.

In the spring, using your spare equipment to replace floors with clean floors and landings that have been scorched using a blow torch. Replace old combs. Minimal interference, speedy hive inspections.

Don't be too greedy! Bees make honey for their survival, leave enough for them to survive.

Give extra food if required; Anne uses Candigold. (A fondant with pollen like Neopol)

Know how many hives your site can support. Anne reckoned the forage available could support 4 or 5 healthy hives.

We tasted 3 very different jars of her honey, which was really good. Lovely tea, cakes and biscuits. A very useful and enjoyable afternoon.

Letter from France

Michael Moss

How I did it **7th June 2014**

'Hello, Mr Moss. It is very hot day today!'

Yes, it is 34c today in the shade and last night it went down to 25c. We are into a nectar flow from the lime trees which the bees start working first in the morning for pollen. Then it's nectar from the limes and white clover. I counted the 5 to 6 bees per square yard.

"It is just over six weeks since I saw you. What have you been doing?"

After making the hive queenless, I looked at the frame I cut in a zig-zag pattern and I had 12 queen cells after 5 days, no sealed cells. The weather was warm and sunny, good for the royal jelly.

On the tenth day I got all the equipment ready and made up three nucs, using some frames from the hive I put the queen in. I cut the queen cells out and put one in each nuc. So altogether I had three nucs, the queen rearing hive, then the old queen on six frames in a make-shift hive.

Then at the end of April we had some wet days (4 in all). I gave the old queen a feed (1/2 pint syrup in two lots. The weather changed on the 2nd May and so by the end of the first week the queens should have been mated; lots of drones flying.

The Acacia trees came into flower, but were only worked for 2 ½ days. Then the weather changed again with more rain.

By the 10th May I saw pollen going into the hives so all was OK. I made the decision to extract the honey. I took off 45lbs (22kilos). Honey mainly dandelion, fruit blossom and horse chestnut. I left the other box on as it was not all sealed. The colour was medium, very thick and perfumed.

15th May, I gave each nuc a frame of emerging brood as they are now short of young bees. After just a quick look, I saw that every nuc had a laying queen. The added frame was shaken so that the bees fall onto the floor of the nuc and mix quickly with the residents. The weather in May was indifferent, but they were working the Canterbury bells, Cistus, Ceonothus and tulip trees for pollen.

So 'D' day! 1st June all hives were looked at and the new queens marked. The old queen was killed and her frames of bees divided between the four new colonies. So now I have two new hives and one hive divided into two, making two nucs. A queen excluder was placed on each and they were given a box (a Langstroth brood box used as a super).

The brood box will be left alone now – just the supers will be looked at every 10 to 14 days until the first week of August.

Note: Each hive had eight frames solid with brood ready for the main nectar flows. It also stopped the hive from swarming – all hives have a young queen which gives them a better chance to go through the winter.

Next year I will re-queen again, but this time I will perform an artificial swarm, not the miller method I used this year. I took a gamble and it paid off and I was lucky with the weather. Next year I will go for the Accacia honey as 2013 was a good year for it. Very really does a tree yield nectar for two years running.

I can see my black bees have been working the onions which I left to flower. I can hear a nightingale singing and there goes a hoopoe and here's 10lbs of cherries which me bees have pollinated.

Notes:

If you are going to do any queen rearing, you should read Hoopers book 'Bees and Honey' and make yourself familiar with the timing of the brood stages.

Your honey surplus will improve and you will spend less time messing about catching swarms, plus you'll be able to breed from your quietest colonies.

When making up nucs, make sure there is enough food for them for three weeks, as any feeding in the first week or two may cause disturbance and robbing.

After placing the queen cell in, leave well alone for three weeks. After 5 weeks she's all yours. Those first 4 weeks she will be very quick on the comb and hide away from the light.

Au revoir.

ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS!
Please send them to the Editor jlyte@btinternet.com
Next newsletter out at the end of August

