
the Petersfield Beekeeper

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SPRING THERE WILL BE NO **APIARY CLEANUP DAY** IN ITS USUAL FORMAT DUE TO NATIONAL COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS. CLEANING OF EQUIPMENT WILL STILL BE CARRIED OUT IN A COVID-SAFE MANNER.



The flowering currant is a very significant plant for beekeepers - see Pippa's article on P2 to find out why.

Please send items for inclusion in the April Newsletter by 25 March to depeyrecave@gmail.com



SPRING INSPECTION TIME

Spring is springing!!

It seems to have been a *very* long exit from winter but at last spring is in sight, and my beekeeping will soon begin! Those of you south of 'The Downs' have probably been inspecting your bees for weeks but in this north-facing garden set on the Lower Greensand hillside overlooking Liss that pleasure has yet to come.

I have learnt my beekeeping from a number of PDBKA members and their words of wisdom always come flooding back at this time of year. I don't know who told me not to inspect my colonies until the flowering currant (*Ribes Sanguineum*) was in flower but it has been my guide for the past eighteen years. It was Graham Rowden who said 'just like with gardening, if it is warm enough to be out in a shirt, it is warm enough to sow seed and open colonies'.

The first spring inspection is always approached with great anticipation - and great preparation. I long ago finished equipment cleaning and repair, stored comb checking and frame construction and have had the equipment needed for my first real inspection - a clean hive stand, floor, brood chamber, queen excluder, cover board and roof waiting behind each hive. Morag, my mentor and bee-friend, was a stickler for cleanliness and 'being prepared', her apiary was on an allotment a short drive from home, no running back to the bee shed for equipment forgotten.

Over the past month hive activity has increased. All colonies are bringing in water and quantities of pollen, an indication brood is being raised and my periodic checks under the roof to see if the precautionary sugar block is being consumed have shown minimal use so I assume the colonies have sufficient stores. If unused, these sugar blocks will soon be returning to the freezer for use on the same hives next winter.

Tony West was responsible for my devotion to 'At the Hive Entrance' by H Storch. Tony maintained you could learn as much about the wellbeing of the colony by observing the hive from the outside as by disturbing the bees, especially early in the season. Even if the day is warm, over 15C, the nights can be cold. Early brood inspections need to be quick, focused on checking for sufficient good, healthy brood in all stages indicating an active, healthy queen.

Tony is also responsible for me uniting colonies in the spring rather than the autumn. Colonies survive the winter differently and what might appear the largest, strongest colony going into winter may emerge smaller than its apparently less robust neighbour. Colonies are smaller and calmer in the spring and the queen more easily seen for removal from the poorer colony prior to uniting through newspaper.

If the queen to be sacrificed is a 'special favourite' she can always be set up in a nucleus colony to keep her good genes available but if she is due 'for the chop', don't waste her pheromones, squash her on your preferred swarm-collection spot.

I have been lucky this year but a number of members have lost colonies over winter, some apparently from starvation, others with plenty of food available, yet others with a complete absence of bees. Great care should be taken in dealing with dead colonies in case disease is the culprit. Colonies should be sealed as soon as death is confirmed to prevent robbing and then the equipment removed from site.

As a precaution, I destroy all brood combs and also stores if they have mouldered. Hardware needs a deep clean before re-use. Sometimes a colony will have dwindled to an unviable size, these bees drift into oblivion in my freezer before frames are burnt.

The March 'BBKA News' and 'BeeCraft' magazines have useful articles on inspection, uniting, spring feeding, dealing with dead colonies.

Pippa



The PDBKA Unsung Hero Award

The March edition of the 'Petersfield Beekeeper' carried information on Brad Davis, The PDBKA Unsung Hero of 2020. This trophy is a beautifully crafted silver hive tool, creation of artist, beekeeper (and Brittany Spaniel breeder!) Guy Bagshaw and presented to the Association in 2016. Awarded annually to a PDBKA member who has toiled away quietly for the good of the association, four members, Greg Cumming, Morag Crawley, Elizabeth Eveleigh and now Brad Davis have their names engraved for posterity. Visit Guy's website to see more of his work

<http://www.guybagshaw.co.uk/>



PDBKA Honorary Membership

Also mentioned were three members, Derek & Jenny Slee and Mike Foard, awarded Honorary Membership of PDBKA. Honorary Membership is an occasional 'honour' bestowed on members who have been active in the association, usually as they leave active beekeeping with PDBKA. At present, in addition to those mentioned, there are nine other 'Honorary' members:

Peter & Christine Mathews, past longtime active PDBKA Committee Members now happily beekeeping in Dumfries

David Purchase, our very helpful and conscientious SBI for a number of years

Jenny & Ian Peters, once Apiary neighbours, Ian kept the Apiary tidy and without Apiary storage, their garage served as our store and Ian its transporter.

Vivien Pike, the owner of our Apiary site

Eric Piper, our longest serving member and respected local beekeeping authority

Pam Willis, dedicated committee member, longtime 'Roneo' printer & poster of the PDBKA Newsletter

Tidda Dobbs, apiary custodian, honey spinner, swarm collector and helpful member

Morag Crawley, dedicated committee member, trainer, Newsletter Editor

Promoting local bees

We are coming to the end of the 2021 new beekeepers' training on the theory of beekeeping and looking forward to the start of the practical phase. We have just under 40 new, enthusiastic beekeepers and this year, the Association would like to encourage them to acquire local bees for their apiaries.

To date, there are 15 people who have expressed keen interest in buying a nuc of local bees. We would like to provide them with local, good-natured, healthy bees, preferably coming from 4th or 5th generation stock.

If you have a colony that produces swarm cells and you have enough stock, would you consider making up a nuc for sale to a new beekeeper? Hilary Hayward has kindly agreed to give nucs a health check if requested.

We are going to rear some queens at the apiary, so if you would like to follow Dean's progress, you are welcome (Covid rules applying). We also plan to demonstrate how to make a cheap nuc travel box at the apiary. (See item below)

The bees have had a tough time during this very wet winter and there are reports of much higher than usual colony losses in this area, so we are all very grateful to any of you that take the extra time to produce nucs for the newer members of our Association.

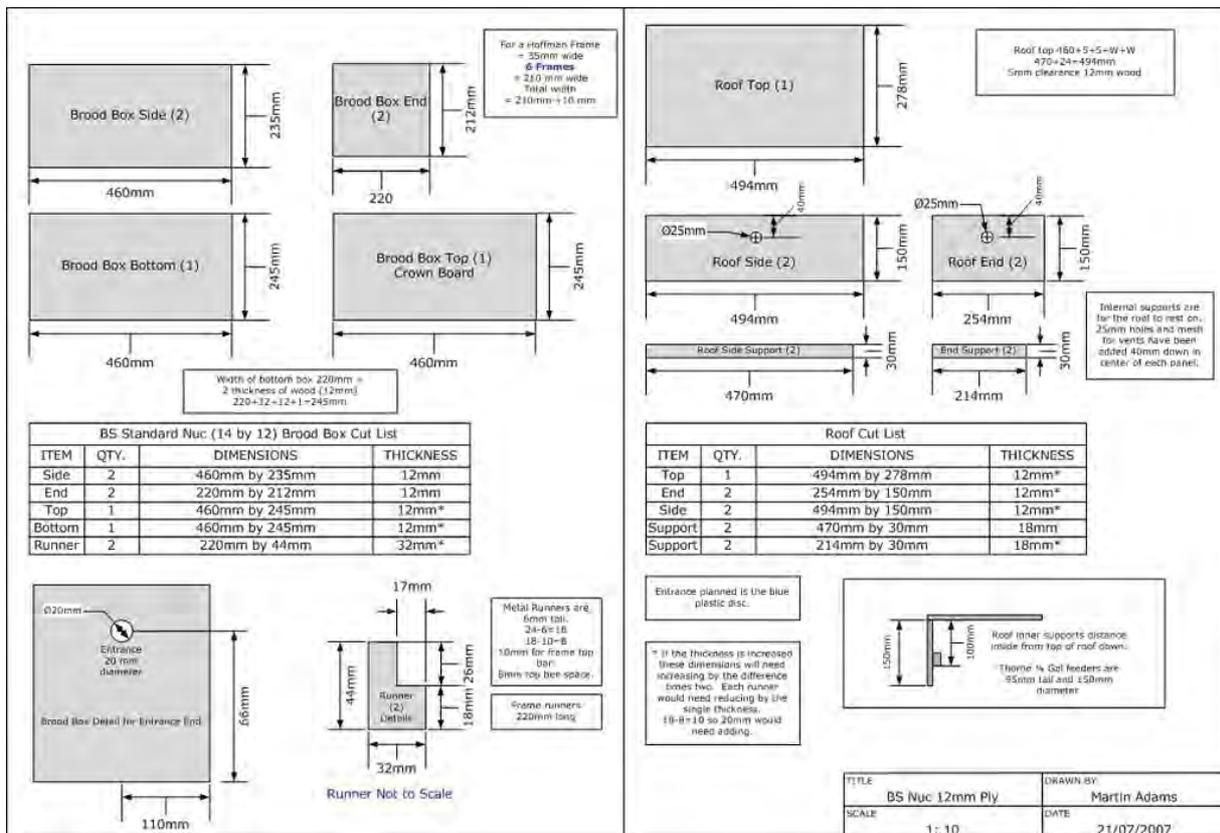
If you are interested, you can contact me on 01420 538315 and I will put you in contact with a new beekeeper or answer any queries.

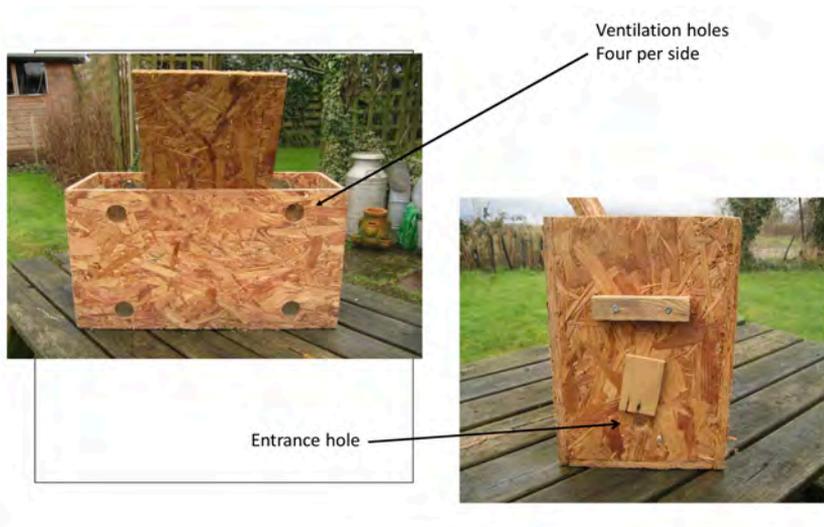
Anne-Chantal Ballard

For those feeling confident/competent to build their own nuc boxes, Brian Herbert's plans are on p5. Here are some other resources:

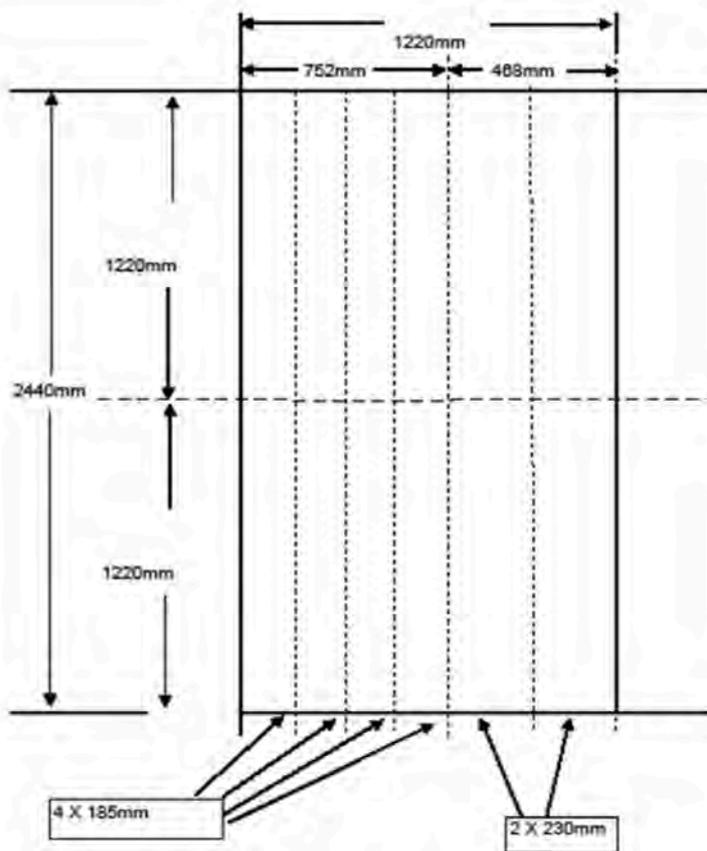
Roger Patterson's instructions for a National nuc box are [here](#)

I also found this detailed diagram:





A HOMEMADE BOX FOR A NUC



OSB Sheet 2440 x 1220 x 11mm

cuts

1 lengthways	185mm	+3mm
2 lengthways	185mm	+3mm
3 lengthways	185mm	+3mm
4 lengthways	185mm	+3mm
5 lengthways	224mm	+3mm
6 lengthways	224mm	+3mm
7 crossways	1220mm	

Many thanks to Brian Herbert for sharing these photos and cutting plans for a Langstroth nuc box. Dimensions would need to be adjusted for a National box. The box is constructed from 12mm OSB. The cutting plans include a 3mm allowance for each saw cut. B&Q and some other stores offer a cutting service.

Materials:
2400x1200x12mm OSB
Mesh for ventilation holes

Tools:
Hole cutter
Nail gun
Glue gun
Mitre clamps
90 degree cutter



BBKA SPRING CONVENTION

Event Timetable

The BBKA Spring Convention, 15th – 18th April: A 'virtual' armchair event Advance Registration opens this week

Just around the corner... The 43rd BBKA Spring Convention, opens on the evening of Thursday 15th and continues through to Sunday 18th April. With over twenty practical and scientific presentations, attendees will find a mix of speakers and topics every bit as broad, interesting and relevant as usual, whatever their experience of bees and beekeeping.

Prof. Keith Delaplane will give the George Knights Memorial Lecture, 'How honey bees use genetics to solve their problems and what we can learn from it', on Saturday 17th April.

Social events planned include 'Locked Down' with Bill Turnbull on Friday evening and the Jimmy Doherty Interviews, plus the Bees-A-Buzzing quiz final, on Saturday. The full programme can now be downloaded from the Spring Convention pages of www.bbka.org.uk.

Registration is needed to take part, but free-to-view content includes a keynote address by Dr David Aston, 7.30pm, Thursday 15th April, plus the Beacon School presentations on Sunday at 15.30 and free access to the Market Place, for your favourite beekeeping equipment suppliers and other exhibitors.

Paid registration is needed to watch all live content (presentations, Q&A etc) and to view content later, on demand. 'Tickets' for the entire three days are £10 in advance (until 15th April), or £12.00 on-the-day. Complimentary registration is available for BBKA Junior and School members. Further information at www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-spring-convention and register soon at www.springconvention.bbka.org.uk. Please use the SAME e-mail address for access thereafter.

Newsletter editors interested in joining a 'Get Together' at 15.45, on Sunday 18th April, require paid Convention registration. They also need to contact: bristolbeekeepersnews@gmail.com by noon on 17th April to sign-up for the session.

A great event to look forward to, which this year comes to you! Best viewed on a full-sized screen, but available on phones and tablets too.....

Joyce Nisbet,
BBKA Trustee and Spring Convention Committee Chair

Thursday 15 April			
19.30-19.35		WELCOME with Jimmy Doherty	Sponsors
19.35-20.30	1	Tipping-points and Perceptions – Keynote address	David Aston III
Friday 16 April			
10.15-10.30		WELCOME TO FRIDAY	
10.30-11.15	2S	The evolution of natural varroa tolerance	Stephen Martin VI
11.30-12.15	3P	European Foulbrood	Colin Pavey II
12.20-13.00		Live Q&A with Stephen Martin and Colin Pavey	
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with 'Beekeeping - Put Your Back Into It - Safely!' Wendy Joelson	
13.30-14.25	4P	From Comb to Candle with Live Q&A	Shirley Bond VII
14.30-15.15	5S	Developing markers for breeding bees	Stephen Pernal
15.30-16.15	6S	What is left of the Welsh Dark Bee?	Dylan Elen
16.15-16.45		Live Q&A with Stephen Pernal and Dylan Elen	
18.00-19.00		Locked Down with Bill Turnbull	
Saturday 17 April - Channel 1			
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SATURDAY	
09.30-10.15	7S	Pollination syndromes – a bee for every blossom	Rinke Vinkenoog IV
10.30-11.15	8	Ins and outs of pollination	Celia Davis
11.30-12.15	9S	Melissopalynology - grassing bees up....	Matthew Pound III
12.20-13.00		Live Q&A with Rinke Vinkenoog; Celia Davis; Matthew Pound	
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with our Sponsors	
13.30-14.25	10P	Spring cleaning the honey bee way with Live Q&A	Lynfa Davies
14.30 15.15	11S	How honey bees use genetics to solve their problems	Keith Delaplane I
15.30-16.15	12P	Management of mini mating nucs	Marin Anastasov
16.15-16.45		Live Q&A with Keith Delaplane and Marin Anastasov	
18.00-19.00		The Jimmy Doherty Interviews plus Quiz – Bees-A-Buzzing Final	
Saturday 17 April - Channel 2			
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SATURDAY	
09.30-10.15	13P	Taking the BBKA Basic Assessment	Sean Stephenson
10.30-11.15	14P	BBKA Exam Technique and Module 1	Margaret Murdin
11.15-12.00		Live Q&A with Sean Stephenson and Margaret Murdin	
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with our Sponsors	
14.30-15.25	15P	Assemble the perfect home for your bees with Live Q&A	Oliver St John
15.30-16.25	16P	Tales from the Honey Isles with Live Q&A	Chris Park
Sunday 18 April			
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SUNDAY	
09.30-10.30	17P	Swarm Control the natural way with Live Q&A	Jane Medwell
10.45-11.30	18S	Asian Hornets: A brief overview and new insights	Peter Kennedy III
11.45-12.30	19P	Know your enemy: Facing the Asian Hornet threat	Lynne Ingram
12.35-13.00		Live Q&A with Peter Kennedy and Lynne Ingram	
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with Lesley and Jerry	
13.30-14.25	20P	Making kitchen cosmetics with Live Q&A	Sara Robb V
14.30-15.30	21S	Research needed for better beekeeping development & Live Q&A	Nicola Bradbear III
15.30-15.45		Beacon School Presentation and Close	

S suggests content is more Scientific; P suggests content is more Practical. Sponsors - see list for details
Programme correct at time of writing but subject to change

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Your Committee for 2021/2

Chairman: Graham Rowden 01730 895368
Honorary Secretary: Melanie Espin 01730 823405 petersfieldbees@gmail.com
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