
the Petersfield Beekeeper



Nobody grows gooseberries and currants for their blooms, however they are certainly appreciated by our bees. Relentlessly frosty mornings have encouraged my notoriously lazy bees to get up even later than usual, but this one is making up for lost time.

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



News from the Apiary

The Custodians are looking forward to the end of May / early June when we hope to open the apiary more generally to the established members of the association. We have a number of interesting projects this year including a double-Queen colony and a colony specifically focused on Queen rearing. There are also plans for bee-basic and bee-health assessments for those interested. We will be in contact with the membership as soon as we understand how Covid restrictions will allow us to open safely. Please keep an eye out in the newsletter, website or via email.

In other news, the Apiary sadly suffered quite a lot of winter-loss so we are recruiting new stock to the apiary as we write. We have bought in a locally-bred nuc and are planning on buying a couple of colonies from the University of Guildford who are down-sizing. We are just awaiting their health inspection before they move to the apiary (thank you Hilary!) Buying in new stock is not something the custodians or committee have done lightly given the risk of bringing new bees into our existing stock but something that has been done carefully and in order to provide enough training colonies early in the season.

The Apiary is currently open to very restricted groups of new beekeepers for their introduction to practical bee-keeping and this is going well under circumstances.

Lots of love from Rowan and the custodians *They really are missing us!
Ed*

Meanwhile, here is a memory of a more "normal" apiary experience from 2012 from Shelagh Phelps.

A cold wet apiary meeting today; this photo shows everyone sheltering from an almighty hail storm whilst waiting for a lull. It was then a quick nip to the hives just to check that the bees had enough supplies of food stored or syrup to keep them going. It seemed more like a spoof chemical warfare film with us all hiding out under the trees!!

It is not always a fair-weather activity! But remember 'Bee-keeping is Fun!'



Swarm control American style!

My brother, a member of PDBKA but beekeeping in Maryland, USA, has his hives on the edge of natural woodland bordering a large pasture. Swarms tend to land in one of two places close to the apiary and easy to collect so Rupert prefers to let his colonies multiply naturally. The scaffolding is erected early in the spring and remains in place until the season is over. The first swarm issued on 15 April, the second, from a different hive, ten days later. The weather in Maryland has been much warmer and spring more advanced than here in Liss. As yet my bees show no signs of swarm preparations, they are just building steadily, busily bringing in nectar, pollen and, most importantly in this bone-dry weather, water from the three small ponds within easy reach of my apiary. We have not had any colony increase for the past two years so this may be the year. With land less scaffolding-friendly than Rupert, I tend towards action rather than reaction and have all the equipment for artificial swarm creation ready to go! *Pippa*



A FOND FAREWELL

I joined The Petersfield & District Beekeepers Association in 2010 after my husband, Pete, decided to surprise me with a beehive for my 43rd birthday. It certainly was a surprise because apart from watching a few documentaries on television about beekeeping, and expressing an interest in one day taking it up as a hobby, the closest I had come to honeybees was observing them at work in my garden.

Deciding I needed a crash course in how to care for these amazing insects before I was due to take delivery of a nuc the following Spring, I searched the Internet to find my nearest beekeeping association which lead me to Greg Cummings, who coincidentally turned out to live a few doors away from me! He put me in touch with Morag Crawley who signed me up for the Winter beekeeping course and the rest, as they say, is history.

I can clearly remember going to collect my first nuc from Thornes in Stockbridge. The date is clearly imprinted on my mind because it was Friday the 13th of May 2011! I was both excited and very nervous as I drove home listening to my bees buzzing away in the back of my car desperately hoping that none would escape!

My first year of owning bees was a steep learning curve and I made sure that I took advantage of the Wednesday and Sunday apiary meetings plus all the association talks and practical sessions to learn the craft. I was extremely fortunate to have Debbie Burton as my mentor and she helped me to hone my skills and pass my Bee Basics exam in 2012.

The single colony in my back garden soon became two and then four as I learnt how to carry out splits and artificial swarms. I was very diligent about inspecting my hives regularly to check for Queen cells but after one particularly cold snap lasting a week when I was prevented from opening up my hives I could only stand by and watch as the sun came out and two of my colonies swarmed at once. One settled in a tree in my garden while the other decided to pay a visit to my neighbour's garden. I am extremely fortunate that I have very understanding neighbours who let me retrieve my swarm - a couple of jars of honey helped keep them sweet too! But it was at this point that I decided I needed to find somewhere else with plenty of space around me to site my bees, and so began the start of a wonderful friendship.

Fellow PDBKA member, Kirsty Loh, very kindly offered me the chance to site my hives in a sweet chestnut field in the beautiful grounds of her home and for the last nine years we have had a great deal of fun and lots of success keeping bees together - too many memories to share in this newsletter but maybe one day I'll get around to writing a book about our exploits!

Last December, with our three daughters having flown the nest, Pete and I moved to Somerset to enjoy his retirement. It hasn't quite been the start we expected with the Coronavirus pandemic still ongoing and the restrictions preventing me from setting up any colonies here for the time being, but we are still enjoying our new life and hopefully things will be back to normal soon.

Having lived in Hampshire for nearly 30 years we will miss the many friends that we have made but look forward to them visiting us as soon as possible. I would like to thank everyone in the PDBKA for their help and kindness over the years. I wish you all the very best for the future and a good beekeeping season ahead.

Loren Lewis



EQUIPMENT FOR SALE



All equipment is for National hives, cleaned in washing soda and/or scorched. Wooden parts are and painted.

Stands	Basic	2 @ £10
	+ Landing board	4 @ £25
	Folding	1 @ £15
Floor	open mesh + block + varroa board	5 @ £20
Brood box		7 @ £20-25
Super		11 @ £15-20
Queen excluder (wood framed, wire)		6 @ £10
Crown board		5 @ £10
Roof		5 @ £30
Dummy board (plastic, DN)		11 @ £5
Mouseguard		4 @ 50p
Mouseguard magnet		1 @ £2.50 (useful to stop pinning your gloves to the hive!)
Hive tools	(Stainless steel)	2 @ £5
Frame hammer		1 @ £2
Feeders	contact	1x2 pint @ £3 unused
		3 x 4 pint @ £3
	Rapid	9 @ £7
	English	4 @ £9
Paynes polynuc	brood box base +lid	3 @ £15
	Extra brood box	1 @ £12
	Super	2 @ £15
	Eke	4 @ £7
	Top Feeder	2 @ £15
	Travel screen	1 @ £4
Thornes Unimel tangential honey extractor		
	Manual	
	Stainless steel	
	Takes 3 x DN4/SN4 frames	
Frames parts – 10 frames for £12 (DN4/SN4)		
Wired foundation (packs of 10)	brood	10 @ £11
	Super	20 @ £7
Runners	plastic	11 pairs @ £1
	Metal	16 pairs @ £3
	Castellated	2 pairs @ £2

More bits when I reach the back of my shed!!!! I live in Grayswood – if you are interested in any equipment, either email or call me

Di Cook

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Your Committee for 2021/2

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