

Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association

Newsletter
July 2018



Forthcoming events

All welcome:

Tuesday July 3rd 6.30pm East LAN Meeting, Stone House Farm, WR13 5JN

Thursday July 5th 6pm North LAN Meeting, Throne Farm, Woebley. HR4 8TE. Supering, and dealing with a honey bound colony.

Tuesday July 10th 6.30pm South LAN Meeting, Holme Lacy, Varroa Life cycle

Thursday July 19th 6.30pm East LAN Meeting, Edwyn Ralph, HR7 4LY

Sunday July 22nd 2.30pm Association Garden Party, Hope-under-Dinmore, HR6 0PX

Tuesday July 24th 6.30pm South LAN Meeting, Holme Lacy, Mock basic assessment.

August 18th-19th Bee Festival, Hampton Court, Bodenham.

Sunday July 22nd 2.30pm Association Garden Party, Hope-under-Dinmore, HR6 0PX

All are welcome, partners and children. Bring your beesuits if you would like to see the bees. The meadow may still be in flower, and the bees working the sweet chestnut and bramble in Queenswood.

Secondhand equipment sale- bring items you wish to sell- all clean and priced please.



Three Counties Show

Congratulations to all those who succeeded in the Show, especially Debbie Smith for her splendid display. We were kept busy all weekend, with plenty of interested youngsters.

An Inspector Calls European Foul Brood in Eastern Herefordshire

It was on a Sunday evening that I received the call I had been expecting. I had been sent an email from the NBU a few days previously telling me that EFB (European Foul Brood) had been found within 3km of my hives. The caller introduced himself to me as the local SBI and asked when would it be convenient to me for him to drop by.

At the appointed hour on the agreed day I opened the front door to a beesuited and prepared inspector, and we swiftly headed off to look at my four hives. I noted with reassurance that as he lit his smoker, he put a disposable plastic cover over the bellows so as to ensure that no infection would be passed from apiary to apiary.

Hive one was the most interesting. On the morning of the day the SBI had telephoned I had found the queen on the ground outside the hive surrounded by a few dozen bees. She did not look well and had clearly been voted out by the colony and forcibly ejected. When the SBI opened up the brood box (no wasting time looking in the supers) we found even more queen cells than I had seen on the day I had spotted the dejected, ejected queen. The laying pattern was been erratic, so no great surprise she had lost the motion of no confidence .

The SBI explained exactly what he was looking for. The tell-tale symptoms of EFB, which manifest in larvae that are a few days old, include:

Brood has a pepperbox appearance

Cappings, which are concave and sometimes punctured, or are scaly

Young unsealed larvae (three to five days of age) in a 'C' shape around the cell walls

Dead larvae which are watery and pasty in appearance, and are yellow or brown/black in colour

The SBI offered a simplified pointer. If the larva looks a bit like the Michelin Man with obvious segmentation, then they are probably healthy, but if not they may be infected. The SBI pointed out an isolated example of chalkbrood, and swiftly spotted a sole example of sacbrood

Hive one was pronounced clear of AFB and EFB, and closed up to let the bees get on with producing their new queen.

Hive two was a bit more exciting. The colony had swarmed about ten days previously. I knew there to be queen cells in there, and when we looked the SBI pointed out that one of them was not only sealed but 'crowned' and ready for imminent hatching. Being queenless the bees were somewhat tetchy and when the SBI received a single sting I felt not *schadenfreude*, but relief that it is not only I that occasionally gets stung. No larvae to be seen, cappings looked fine so no traces of EFB

Hive three was, in comparison, a delight. The prolific laying pattern was a model of tidiness and good order. I am useless at spotting queens so was delighted when the SBI pointed her out and I was able to cage and mark her. This was my 'Italian girl' (*L'italiana in alveare* rather than *L'italiana in Algeri*), so called because the cubital index assessment I had done on microscopy day suggested a strong element of *Apis Mellifera Ligustica* in her heritage. Colony declared free of EFB.

Hive four was merely boring. Not a strong colony, the larvae that were there were clean as the proverbial whistle.

Relieved, we headed back to disrobe and sit down in the kitchen for a quick cup of tea. The SBI gave me a copy of the NBU booklet on foulbrood diseases (downloadable here: [Foul Brood leaflet](#)). I learned that a typical problem case might be a couple of neglected, weak hives which succumbed to EFB making them so weak that they became subject to robbing by other bees who then distributed the EFB pathogen back to their own hives. Whilst he was happy to tell me about various things going on in the bee world he was the soul of discretion in giving no clues as to the whereabouts of the incident of EFB that had prompted his visit, beyond it being within 3Km

Having trained as a biologist who then worked on fish before moving to work on bees (echoes of the trajectory of Karl von Frisch), the SBI clearly knew his stuff, both theoretical and practical. Judging by how little smoke he used, either the ministry is extremely mean on their smoker fuel allowance or here was a chap who was good at his job.

He asked me to keep a close eye out for the tell-tale signs he had now taught me, encouraged me to get in contact with him, and let me know that he would be dropping back again in a year's time as a matter of course.

All in all, far from the fearful experience I had feared. Free of charge I had had an expert beekeeper give my hives a once over and offer me a little guidance as to what to do. That is what I call a bargain.

Above all I now know that I am free of both AFB and EFB. Even better, so are my bees

Roger Gill



Note the cover on the smoker



Queen Rearing, Hope-under-Dinmore, June 7th 2018

A small group of beekeepers gathered at Leigh Bank to try their hand at queen rearing. I had already set up a queen rearing colony, with the queen in a brood box below the queen excluder, then a super, then a cloake board, and then another brood box complete with brood, feeders and young bees. See <http://theapiarist.org/cloake-board-queen-rearing/>. We all had a go at grafting with young larvae taken from another colony. The cloake board had been closed 24 hours beforehand, effectively rendering the top box queenless. We carefully went through this box shaking off the bees from the frames and cutting out all the queen cells. The grafted larvae were inserted into the centre of the top box, the feeders topped up and the bees left to get on with raising new queens. This they did well and we had a good percentage take of queen cells started.

I had a look a couple of days before they were due to emerge-oh dear most had been torn down. Had I forgotten to top up the feeders or was there another explanation? None of the cells had emerged, they had all been destroyed from the side. I moved the top box and put it on top of a snelgrove board above another colony and decided to start again with the queen rearing. A week later I looked in the original box- there was the culprit, a nice dark queen, I have no idea where she came from. The best laid plans.....beekeeping is full of surprises and I suppose that is one of the reasons we get so hooked.

Mary Walter



South Lan Meeting, 12th June 2018.

Always a super swarm welcome at the South LAN Bee School. Mike Healey (aka Rita) opened the evening splitting us into four groups and asking two Queen Questions, in which Steve gave a well educated answer to the first question. Then some of us gave our mumbled version answer to the second question. Then Chris Wright gave a super demo on clearing the supers to take honey from the hive, showing two different ways of doing so, Colin Pavey added a third option.

Then we moved on to the regular hive inspections with four groups looking at two hives each. Completing general hive inspections for the time of year. All hive records completed and kit washed and put away. We then had a real treat from a super bbq chef Mike Taylor who cooked sausages and pre prepped salads all washed down with either cider / beer / tea / coffee. Then Colin Pavey just had to ask "where's the cake then?", now he does like his cake. And Jon bought out a super cake. So on a lovely warm evening Bee Keepers chatted to wanna Bee keepers and this is how Andy Tatchell says it should Bee.

Some of the regulars were missed, but sure we will meet again, we know where, we know when, on a summers eve.

Thank you all.

Julie Andrews

I wonder how the supers were cleared. At a guess using porter bee escapes, a rhombus clearer board, or by shaking and brushing (Ed).



My favourite, the rhombus clearer board.

HBKA East LAN meeting

5th June 2018 at Stone House, Cradley, by kind permission of Kath and Bob Cross.

This was a day for checking through all the hives we had seen and worked on earlier in the season.

First was a 14x12 hive which Bob had earlier had 25lbs of honey off. Queen seen but as yet no eggs and no brood.

Next came an elegant WBC which had already delivered 45lb of honey. No queen spotted, queen cells of which a couple were open.

Third hive was the Langstroth being brought on for the Flow Hive. These girls had swarmed on 13th May. As at 1st June there were still no eggs. We saw a couple of queen cells that had been broken down. This, together with the fact that the colony was relatively well behaved, suggested that there was a queen in there somewhere. There were plenty of stores in the brood box, so we were advised that if the new queen did start laying well, consideration would need to be given to swapping out some of these frames for ones with just foundation so as to give her room for laying.

Next came a polyhive. They had swarmed on 5th May. At 28th May no eggs seen but on 1st June there had been eggs everywhere. Bob had not taken any honey off this hive and as they had plenty of stores we swapped a couple of frames for fresh foundation. We also saw the fat ginger queen strutting her stuff.

We were to unite hives five and six. We saw evidence of a drone laying queen in hive five, (drone cells laid seemingly at random) but could not see the queen, so perhaps she had already been killed. Bob put a couple of sheets of the Hereford Times under the queen excluder and an eke over it, added another queen excluder and then hive six on top. Dave Sutton took the opportunity to show us how to use a tube and foam piston for containing a queen for marking. A few drones were marked by way of practice, (at the risk that they might fly off and confuse someone somewhere who opens their hive and finds them.)

As we adjourned for refreshments, I checked my emails and saw that whilst we had been checking the hives the NBU had sent thought a message to me. European Foul Brood found within 3km from my hives. I would be contacted to be inspected. It made for good topic for conversation over the tea and cakes.

Roger Gill





Bob's Beelines

What a year, cold late spring. Beast from the East and rain. Now dry and very hot temperatures in the 80's. The bees are very strong in most hives but keep a check on the stores. Some of my hives plus the swarms I have been feeding.

EFB as been found in the east of the county. My apiaries plus others in the east LAN have been given the all clear, Good News!

Bobs Bee Day 23rd June.

To set up for the day was a lot of hard work. Only 13 people came some from the East LAN members and 5 from Hereford which was very disappointing, Thank you to all those who attended and helped out.

PLEASE use these events or LOSE them

Thank you all again
Bob and Kath Cross



A spare dead queen kept in the freezer can be a useful resource. She can be used to collect up waifs and strays- for example the remnants of a swarm. The bees can then be shaken out in front of another colony.

Mary

North LAN Apiary Meeting

Throne Farm Woebley

June 21st

A few beekeepers gathered at Woebley to transfer our bees into their new quarters. We currently have two colonies there, one with a 2018 queen, and one with a 2016 queen. We will probably requeen the old one later in the season.

We went on to inspect Rihard's collection of 2018 swarms. They are all doing well and building up in his colourful langstroth hives. Colin gave us a useful demonstration of disease inspection on one of the swarms. He extracted one larva from its cell and pulled out the gut, which in the case of EFB would be swollen and discoloured. All swarms should be given a disease inspection after they have settled in for a complete brood cycle, although EFB would be unlikely to show up when there is a good nectar flow.

We went back to the house for a generous supply of cake and tea.

Mary Walter



I am not sure what Colin is demonstrating here!



Due to pressure of work our webmaster John Hewitt has five hives for sale; three of them populated with good colonies of bees. Plus two shorty bee-suits, a toolbox with some tools & a smoker. Offers around £300 would be OK. The farmer is be happy to keep them where they are (near Pembridge) Contact John at <https://cottagewebcraft.co.uk/>

Topical Tip

With nectar flowing fast the bees need plenty of space to process it. Nectar consists of at least 80% water, and the bees concentrate it down to less than 20%. If spare comb is in short supply they will fill the brood nest with nectar and reduce the queen's laying space, possibly leading to swarming. It is important to get the bees working in the supers. If they are reluctant to move up one ploy is to add a super frame into the brood box, next to the brood, and move it into the super once the bees have drawn the comb.

It is ideal conditions to get drawn comb for next year. A brood box full of foundation on a strong colony will be drawn and filled with honey. This can be extracted and the clean combs stored for next year.

If foul brood is suspected, contact our RBI, Colin Pavey email colin.pavey@apha.gsi.gov.uk. At present, we do not have a local SBI.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS :

Chairman	Andy Tatchell
Vice Chairman	Debbie Smith
Secretary	VACANCY
Treasurer	John Robinson
Membership Sec.	Steve Utley
Committee	Robert Cross Mike Healey Mary Walter Nicola Percival

LAN CO-ORDINATORS

South LAN:	Val Lilwall
North LAN:	Mary Walter
East LAN:	Fiona McKinley

Committee News

Sadly Charlie Taylor has had to stand down for personal reasons. If anyone would like to take her place please contact Andy Tatchell.

We do need willing volunteers to help run the Association, please contact us if you can help. In particular we need a secretary and treasurer.

Bee Festival Hampton Court, Bodenham August 18th-19th

We could do with some help with this event-any volunteers? Free entry to the lovely gardens in return for a stint on our stand.