

Bromley Bee News Monthly Update Published by the Bromley Beekeepers

Welcome to the **October 2005** issue of Bromley News.



The 2005 Bromley & Orpington Honey Show

This year's Bromley and Orpington branch honey show was an outstanding success thanks to the efforts of our Show Secretary Peter Bashford and the many helpers on the day. Congratulations to all the prize winners. I have created a slide show of my photographs on our web version of this newsletter which can be viewed from www.kentbee.com/bromley/newsletters/octbbk05.htm

Sit down with a glass of mead and enjoy 64 photographs...

The full Show Secretary report will be put on our website at a later date.

Internet Resources

Apis-UK August 2005 issue No.38 prints to 33 sides of A4. Contents: Editorial; Beekeeping news; Bee press; Research News; Articles: Bees and Gravitomagnetism (Part 2 of 4) Ian Rumsey; Bee Propolis A real Alternative James Fearnley; Clearing the decks Mike Oliver; Build your own wasp trap Graham White; Genetics Part 2; Apimondia 2005 Photographs Steven Turner; Island Apes Chad Cryer; Recipe of the Month: Amalou (Morocco); Fact File: Infant Botulism and Honey; Historical Note: Swarm collection advert 1792; Poem of the Month: A Bee his burnished Carriage Emily Dickinson; Readers Letters: Horatio Richards, Les May, Anthony Morgan, Liviu Gostea, Pam Hunter; Diary of Events; Quote of the Month and more. Total D/L 606KB. <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters05/apis-uk0805.htm>

You can download the October 2005 Kent Beekeepers Association newsletter from the

URL: <http://www.kentbee.com/kentnews.htm>

Steven Turner

Apiary News

I suppose the most interesting event last month was Clive getting a call from the Tower of London to remove bees that had taken up residence in the Constable Tower. Being a two handed job Clive enlisted me to be the second pair of hands and so off we went. The colony was located behind a wooden panel and we gained access up a ladder and through a sliding trap door which we had to close behind us to guard the passing visiting public against possible flying bees. We put our ears to the panel and decided where the bees had settled and Clive went to work with hammer and chisel to remove the panel. Bull's eye!

There they were several combs of sealed honey and three or four combs of brood. One by one Clive cut out the combs and handed them to me. The combs of honey went into a bucket and the combs of brood were tied into frames and placed in a standard brood box which we had positioned outside on the roof.

The honey had a spicy flavour and was most delightful. I learned later from Jane Smith that there is a spice warehouse nearby so no doubt the bees were collecting that in place of pollen. It then came on to rain so soaked through we decided to call it a day. Four days later we returned to collect our box, but no luck, many of the bees had returned to the old site and had already produced some new comb. With the aid of a portable vacuum cleaner we collected up these bees and coaxed them into the box and at that stage Clive spotted the Queen running in. We came away more confident than before and went back a couple of days later after dark and collected our new stock of bees. I am pleased to say they have settled down in Clive's apiary very well.

Mike Oliver's team have had little success with the Queen Rearing and on my side I have not done much better. I managed to get five stocks started but three petered out, and I have now got another one on the go but all will be explained on Sunday at the meeting.

All there is left to do is to feed the stocks and get the mouse guards on.

Peter Springall

Member Article

What a blooming palaver!

Our Apiary meeting at Bromley on Sunday 19 th June was much enlivened by some practical beekeeping.

The afternoon started when I opened a mini-nuc in which we had our precious Dark European queen. Just to re-iterate, Peter Springall and I brought back some grafts from our visit to East Midlands Group and despite being disappointed to find most of them had not survived, we have at least one queen. We looked in on her about two weeks ago and saw her but found no brood. It is possible that she was either not mated then or was simply not fully into laying.

On this occasion there she was, beautifully dark and sleek; happily rushing around the combs and showing us how clever she was by displaying her small cluster of sealed brood cells and some eggs. This was quite a moment for all of us since it is the first step in our own breeding programme. As was the custom, we decided now that she was definitely laying we would mark her. This is when things started to get interesting.

First she was dropped on the table and then scooped up. Then she was dropped into the box and raced around like a tiny dodgem car. Then she was picked up. She escaped and flew onto a part of my anatomy that could have been embarrassing. I tactfully suggested one of the male onlookers collect her since my hands were full of mini-frames and bees at the time. Then she slipped out of Peter's fingers and disappeared into the bright summer sky!

We all looked at each other and said, "Oh, *bother!*" or something like that.

Ah well, at least we had eggs and brood on the comb so all was not lost and Peter just said, "she'll be back."

Now enter Jenny Spon-Smith – our champion queen finder – who walked back quite casually from the place where the mini-nuc was lodged about ten minutes later and said calmly, "She's back – I saw her go in." (!!!) My ghastr was flabbered - is there no limit to this woman's talents? All Peter said was, "didn't you mark her, then?"

Peter opened his nuc with the Dark European queen we thought he had there, but despite having thought that we saw brood on a previous occasion – the cupboard was bare and Her Majesty almost certainly absent. We all breathed yet another sigh of relief that we had the other one – her nickname is now Mrs Houdini by the way.

Peter then opened a queen less nuc he had made up to house a queen which should be with us from Ireland in the coming week and we all wondered why the bees rushed out like office workers at 5pm almost flattening the bystanders. It turned out that Peter had forgotten to unblock the entrance and they had been there drumming their tiny fingers and waiting for opening time. So even the best of us drop a clanger now and then.

Next on the programme was Robin Spon-Smith being stung on the nose when he opened his nuc – no meeting would be the same without Robin being stung by his own bees, of course, but a few eyes watered in sympathy. At least there was a laying queen in his nuc who was sensible enough to allow herself to be marked without any fuss, having had one of her workers make her point with Robin.

The finale was arranged by Peter who had observed a swarm taking possession of an empty deep National hive with about seven or eight brood frames in place. Upon opening the hive a great mass of wild comb was attached to one end. We had to use an inverted roof, a standard National brood box sitting in it, topped by a deep National brood box, to accommodate this massive pendant.

An afternoon of unplanned fun with Bromley Beekeepers but, as usual, we all learnt something in a most enjoyable way.

Mike Oliver

Diary Dates

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 20th-23rd October 2005 - The 2005 National Honey Show will be held at the Royal Air Force Museum , Hendon, London , UK . Judging of more than 200 classes of honey, beeswax, candles, mead, art-work, essays etc begins at 09.00 on Thursday 20th and the Show is open to the public from 14.00 until 18.45 that day. On Friday 21st it is open 09.30-18.45, and on Saturday 09.30-16.50. Admission for members is free, but for non-members it is £7.00 payable at the door. In addition to the competitive classes, there is a full programme of lectures, given by speakers of world renown, There are also many trade and educational stands. For the latest news see our website: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk>

Sunday 6th November 2005 - Apiary Meeting. Starts 11:45am . Includes refreshments.

Tuesday 15th November 2005 at 7.30pm - The Bromley branch AGM and honey show cup presentation in the branch club house. Full reports from all officers. Includes refreshments. All Bromley members should attend.

Saturday 26 November 3pm - Kent Education Group Guest Lecture Celia Davis: Mr Bee. To be held at Langton Lecture Theatre, West Kent College, Brook Street , Tonbridge. More details from <http://www.beedata.com/news.htm>

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