

NEWSLETTER #217 – Summer 2016

Next meeting: 22nd September: a members' review of the season

Now is the time....

...to plan for the autumn and winter. Now that the stress of swarming has largely passed, now is an opportune moment to think ahead and plan for the autumn and winter ahead. Yes, there's (possibly!) a (large?) crop of honey to deal with, but there are many other important things to get set over the coming weeks. Are the colonies queenright? Do weak colonies need uniting? *Varroa* treatment is a key part of integrated pest management and immediately after the honey is removed is the time to do it. Mike Thornley kindly organized the purchase of Apivar strips and, if you haven't already done so, please collect it from him ASAP. Remember to monitor the mite drop to gauge infestation levels.

The beekeeper's view.....



The close-up view.....



Honey show

Please set aside a jar of honey and enter it into the honey show. There are categories for runny and set honey, as well as a frame of honey.

Some of you may be aware that there was a referendum last month.

A week is a long time at the apiary.

A week ago all was coming up roses at the apiary. The sun shone and the bees appeared to be thriving and industrious. The strongest colony had already produced a super of honey and more was expected. The beekeeper put it down to foreign blood, remembering in the distant past purchasing an Italian queen.

A week later the weather had turned for the worse and there was a sense of listlessness down at the apiary. The bees in the strongest colony were now somewhat defensive, or downright aggressive if one is being politically incorrect. The supers were empty. The colony had lost cohesion and purpose. There was no queen, and no sign of eggs either. Urgent action was required but where would help come from?

It was clear that one of the two other colonies, which had been nurtured through the winter and fed constantly through the season, would not survive on its own and needed to be amalgamated with a neighbour. But the bees from the last colony, of good native stock, who had been threatening to swarm for months had

done just that, thus showing some sense of survival instinct and independence. All the beekeeper could do was to hold his head in his hands and curse.

Club Apiary – an update

An army of volunteers – a core of Nikki, Eddie, Mike, Sandra, Donnie and Tim - headed by Neil has taken care of the club colonies and apiary. Swarming has been tricky – watch this space for the final outcome!