

East Lancs BKA Apiary Report April 2019

State of the colonies

Good news! The first check inside the colonies was carried out on Tuesday April 16th with help from Jeff Ellis, Ken Isherwood, and Pat Smith.

All eight colonies have come through the winter well. All colonies are queen-right. Queens were seen in four of the hives and the presence of eggs in the other four confirms that a queen was present.

The smallest of the colonies, C2, which is a swarm captured last year, needs feeding to build it up, but is otherwise healthy.

Three of the colonies, including the poly hive (A10), need some combs changing as they're quite dark and dirty. This applies in particular to A10. My own experience with poly hives is that they're more active throughout the year, and even during the winter, and more of the frames are used, even in the corners. We've bought a new complete poly hive from Paynes and once this is painted (you need to paint poly hives to prevent UV degradation of the polystyrene) we can start replacing parts of the old hive.

State of the Apiary

Anyone who's been to the Apiary in the last few weeks, will have seen that we've removed the wire mesh from the floor and jet washed the decking. It's now much cleaner, and although there are some pieces of the decking that need replacing, the floors are much safer to walk on.

We're continuing to work on the raised beds in the Apiary and a dry-stone wall has been built in the viewing area outside the Apiary. This is for people to sit on to view the Apiary from behind the mesh screen.

Apiary Session, Saturday April 27th

The first Apiary Session of the year was a damp affair . . .

It was cold and showery, not a day to be opening the hives, though I had planned for the feeder to be set up on C2 and some of the easier comb replacement to be done.

Nicky Leeth was the volunteer beekeeper helping out on the day, and we had seven people, including three children. We suspect that some of those who might have come realised that the weather would limit what we could do.

One of the families had just got a nuc and were looking for advice on what to do next. The other family's son wants to start beekeeping but hasn't got bees yet. Both families took away membership forms, so we should be getting two new club members. There was also a guy who's had bees for a while but they've suddenly become aggressive and we suggested he contacted another one of our (more experienced) members who's been mentoring him to see if he can advise what to do.

We managed to fill the two hours with a short visit to the Apiary in bee suits in the rain, and, using the cutaway hive and the picture hive, answer all the questions that were raised.

Everyone went away thanking us for the help we gave.

That's the Buzz for now . . .

*Dave Parker
Apiary Manager*