

Heligan Gardens

Group Apiary Report Jan 2018

This was my first year overseeing the group apiary at Heligan Gardens and a great experience it was too. My main aim was to get 4 colonies up and running.

The existing 2 colonies were very weak but we were fortunate enough to get donated 2 colonies and a swarm in May so we were up and running very quickly. I also managed to capture another couple of swarms at around the same time.

I built some new stands for the hives and at present we have 3 Rose Hives and 2 Nationals homing the colonies.

I refurbished the Top Bar Hive and that made fantastic progress with one of the swarms, until in August they decided to abscond. Plenty of good comb now established, so in a good position to get that up and running this year too.

I have been looking at more sustainable ways of managing the colonies so that the bees exist in a more natural environment. The colonies have not been artificially supported with varoa treatments or supplementary feeding, queen excluders have not been used, and the bees are encouraged to build their own comb. I have also refrained from using any kind of swarm control. In the end only one of the colonies decided to swarm anyway and I managed to capture that and donate to one of our new members.

We also had a successful Bee Day event at Heligan Gardens with our RBG Event tent and we plan to be repeating a few more of these this coming summer.

So all in all a very successful year and looking forward to more progress this season.

Group updates will be e-mailed nearer the time to keep everyone in the loop.

Many thanks for everyone who attended the apiary visits and helped out with the event tent.

Simon Kellam
Apiary Manager