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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISION NEWSLETTER: March 2014<http://www.pyrford.com/weybridgebees> |

*Editorial*

Teachers have some big pressures to cope with currently. I assure you that this is the case, despite the parody-style presentation of teachers’ work consisting of ‘long holidays’, etc. Even in happier times for teachers, I used to feel that amidst the isolation, and in a situation where positive feedback was not all that common, there was the satisfaction of being able to influence young lives, and hence that of their parents and also that of their children of future days. It was hopefully the effect of a pebble dropped into a pond. At the Winter Meeting reported below, when listening to Edwina telling of her work with bees among women prisoners at Send Prison, it came to me again that keeping bees is such a worthwhile activity. I have long felt this to be the case from so many aspects. And here was another. Hopefully Edwina’s work will result in spreading ripples to help lives that have gone wrong, and then reach even further afield. It will be gratifying to our members that these particular ripples were started by the pebble of Edwina soon after she completed the beekeeping course run by our Division.

Talk on Bee Diseases, March 11th

David Rudland, who, with Celia his wife, runs East Surrey Bees and is also our local Seasonal Bee Inspector, will be coming on Tuesday, 11th March to talk about bee diseases and their control. This is one session of our Beginners Course, but all members and friends are welcome (indeed are encouraged) to come to the meeting on this extremely important topic. Honey bees in the UK as well as in the rest of the world are in a very serious condition, and we all need to know as much as we can to help to minimise their problems. The meeting will be in our usual venue, St Peter’s Church Hall, 1 Burwood Road, Hersham KT12 4AA and will start promply at 7.30 pm.

Report of Winter Meeting, Friday 28th February

A very encouraging number (about 40) attended this meeting at which there were four presentations by our own members who told of their experiences and activities in beekeeping. Paul Hildersley spoke about collecting swarms at Heathrow airport, emphasising the limitations to normal procedures resulting from security regulations. Tim Hutchinson demonstrated a tilting device that he had designed and made to facilitate the complete and safe draining of a honey bottling tank. Edwina Wardle described her work among the prisoners and staff in the apiary she has set up at Send Womens’ Prison. Lou Gilpin gave an account of his first week in beekeeping. Unfortunately his newly installed colony was massively attacked by robbers on its second day. Despite much research on the internet, resulting in him trying out several ingenious anti-robbing devices, the eventual solution was to move the colony to another apiary. The four talks were illustrated with photographs and or hardware, and each stimulated a very interesting and helpful discussion. Marion C. showed sad photographs of the flooding of a garden apiary in Chertsey, and some less upsetting pictures of a fallen tree containing a colony of bees in Whiteley Village. This tree was restored to the vertical using some props, so it will be interesting to see how the colony fares in the spring. A nice PS to this latter story is that one of the Village staff, Sam Lacey, who was involved in the rescue of the bees has since enrolled on our beginners’ course.

There was no doubt that the evening was very much enjoyed. As we have found in similar meetings in the past, much can be learned from our own members. Eminent speakers are not essential for a successful meeting.

 Geoff C.

Final Winter Meeting, Wednesday, April 2nd (hopefully spring by then)

This will be a talk on Bee Nutrition by another of our members, Jonah Chitolie. He will be explaining how the bees break down and use pollen and proposing some new ideas on such matters as the reason for the presence of the nosema in the gut of the bee. He regards this organism as a contributor to the health of the bee rather than as it is normally viewed, as a parasite. The meeting will be in our usual place, St Peter’s Church Hall, 1 Burwood Road, Hersham KT12 4AA, and will start at 7.30 pm. Jonah is contributing a series of three articles on this topic to BeeCraft, the first two being in the February issue, page 15 and the March issue, also page 15 – do read them.

Marion C.

**Basic Assessment study group**

In our December issue, anyone interested in studying for ‘The Basic’ was invited to contact Tim Hutchinson, who runs a study group in preparation for this. It is strongly recommended that all who have kept bees for one year or longer should take this assessment, to indicate that they are competent to manage the basic things required by their colonies. It is not an in-depth assessment, and the study groups will ensure that all are ready to take it.

There will be five weekly meetings and possibly a practical as well. Please would you let Tim know of your interest as soon as possible as the group’s meetings will be starting shortly. He can be contacted by email at olddrone@virginmedia.com

**Summer Garden / Apiary Meetings**

Sue Lawes has kindly agreed to co-ordinate these monthly meetings again this year, but as she will be far away, in the Southern Hemisphere, in fact, she has asked me to organise the first, which will be in May. If you have any suggestions, or would be able to host this or any other meeting, please let me know as details of at least the first will need to be put into the April Newsletter.

Thank you, Marion C.

**For sale: Fondant and Nucs of Bees**

Bakers Fondant for sale in 12.5kg boxes priced at £14.50 each. The fondant can be stored for many months, even years providing it is kept sealed; use what you need and wrap the remainder for the future.

A number of overwintered five-frame nucs will be available in April, supplied on standard deep National frames. These nucs are headed by a locally mated queen raised last year (2013).  The queens are prolific, being the progeny of colonies with good temperament and excellent honey producers.  The queens are supplied marked and if required can be clipped. The price of each nuc is £175.00. The nucs are supplied in a returnable box.

Contact details: Email: jonathan-hall@talktalk.net Tel: 07850 696844.

**Bee Books for Sale**

Martin Johnson, one of our Associate Members who is not planning to keep bees in the immediate future, has some near-new books for disposal. He is generously offering to share with the Division any money received from the sales. The prices quoted below are cover prices (RRPs). The books are as follows:

*Keeping Bees*, by Pam Gregory and Claire Waring. Green Guide series. £9.99.

*The Rose Hive method*, by Tim Rowe. Green Hat Books. £15.

*Bees at the bottom of the garden*, by Alan Campion. Northern Bee Books. £9.99.

Any offers to Marion C., please.

**Beekeeping equipment for sale**

Vic Halliday still has some good equipment for sale. Full details are given in an attachment.

**Nucs for sale**

I will be offering very high quality nucs again this year. Every nuc will have good quality frames, plenty of brood in different stages and a British Buckfast queen. Nucs can be ordered in either a professionally made wooden hive box or a correx box. If any of your members order a nuc from me and say that they are a BBKA member, I will give them a 5% discount on each nuc ordered. The prices are as follows:

Frame Nucs - 2014 Season

5 frames in a wooden hive box £195

5 frames in a correx box £175

14x12 Frame National Nucs - 2014 Season

5 frames in a wooden hive box £225

5 frames in a correx box £195

Commercial Frame Nucs - 2014 Season

6 frames in a wooden hive box £215

Mr Bees (Tim Berni, in Suffolk) - 01394 274386/07503773630 [www.mrbees.co.uk](http://www.mrbees.co.uk/)

**Apiary site wanted**

I am looking for somewhere to locate six hives. Any clues where I can find a space that is not compromised by farming activity with sprays would be appreciated.

Bruce Murchie (brucem@xeniumsolutions.co.uk or 01932 867127)

**A talk: Tools for understanding and improving bee health – Meridian BKA, 7th April**

To be given by Dr Jay Evans from Washington DC. Has studied at Princetown and Utah universities and has carried out research in Beltsville, Maryland for the last 15 years. He is currently heading a consortium to sequence the genome of the varroa mite in order to develop novel control methods for this key pest. The talk will be given at the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Martin Street, Bishop Waltham SO32 1DN on Monday 7th April at 7.15 for 7.30pm. On completion, finger buffet with a glass of wine. Cost £5 per head.

*A flyer giving details is attached. I suggest that you try to attend. This speaker sounds a bit special. – Ed.*

**BBKA Worker Bee – the e-newsletter from the BBKA**

If you have problems with any links or downloads please advise Jane Moseley - BBKA.

[View this email in your browser](http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b2f7bb7991a0c2554c620addc&id=3696faf17a&e=7eb62db571) *Includes details of the BBKA Swarm Collectors List 2014.*

**High varroa mite populations in some of my colonies this winter (see December issue)**

Further to the reports (in December and January issues of the newsletter) of very high varroa populations in my 5 garden hives, despite autumn treatment, I have now had the opportunity of looking through them. My worst fears are realised. The two large colonies have almost died out (one of which produced 90lb of honey last year), one nucleus colony has certainly died out, one may have a queen (a new 2013 Buckfast) that can be rescued, and the other has a few more bees than the others and its 2013 Buckfast queen is still there, so there is hope of rescuing this colony as well. The last (and first) time I had this kind of experience was in spring 2006, and was attributed to the varroa mites having developed resistance to the pyrethroids used; this resistance had appeared during the winter that had just ended. We have some ideas on this more recent loss of colonies. It appears be due to the very high varroa population reported last autumn for which the reasons are not altogether clear. Since writing the above, I have been able to look through the rest of my colonies, at Painshill Park. One very odd one reminds me of CCD, although I know we don’t officially have this in the UK. No bees in the hive, plenty of stores and just a few dead bees on the floor. I had something very similar a few years ago, and another of our members had the same experience last year. Has anyone else had this Marie-Celeste-type phenomenon? Are the problems with the bees increasing exponentially, as they say these days? Geoff C.

**Where do your bees fly?**

On this website you can put in where you keep your bees, put in 3 miles and get a nice map of where they will go: <http://www.freemaptools.com/radius-around-point.htm> David Parker

**Surrey County Show – Honey Show**

You will find the Honey Show schedule for the Surrey County Show attached. Entries close April 25th. The Show is, as usual, on Bank Holiday Monday, the date this year being May 26th.

**Honorary Treasurer wanted for the BBKA**

The BBKA are advertising for an Honorary Treasurer in the March issue of the BBKA News and on their website. They are also consulting various professional bodies in an attempt to recruit a suitable person.  If you are interested, please see the attachment.

**Request for help after winter floods**

As the bad weather seems to have now subsided many are left with the task of clearing up, assessing the damage and facing the challenge of moving forward to rebuild their lives; while others are still living in the chaos. The BBKA is interested to learn how many of our members have been affected so that we can if possible pull together to help those reinstate equipment and bees for those who have suffered from the hurricane force winds and flooding.

To help us identify where help is needed, please share the following survey link with all beekeeper members and complete from an association perspective as well.

Once we have analysed the returns, we shall share it with you, so that we all know where assistance and support is needed.

[**CLICK HERE TO TAKE PART**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BBKA_Storm_Survey_2014)

Jane Moseley, General Secretary & Operations Director, BBKA CV8 2LG 02476 696679 [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk/)

**Bumblebees infected with honey bee diseases**

The journal *Nature* reports that the honey bee pathogen *deformed wing virus*  and also *Nosema ceranae* have been identified in adult bumblebees. More details are to be found on the following website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26242960>

*Thanks to Richard Hignett and David Parker for this information. – Ed.*

**Special Interest Day on Varroa**

The fight against varroa is ongoing, the BBKA is holding a Special Interest Day on 8th March at Stoneleigh Park between 10.30 and 4.30pm at the NBC.

Presentations will be made by:

Professor Ratneiks from LASI about the latest developments on varroa management

Wally Thrale, Bedford Beekeepers - the developments and outcomes of the East Anglian Research Varroa project

NBU - current strategies

Bee Gym Presentation

Followed by discussion for further research, beekeeper needs and discerning the route forward.

If you or any of your members would like to take part in this Special Interest Day then please register your interest with Jan Alcock - jan.alcock@bbka.org.uk

Please find the agenda attached.

Jane Moseley, General Secretary & Operations Director, BBKA CV8 2LG 02476 696679 [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk/)

**Bees are better for strawberries**

Bee pollination doesn’t just boost yields of fruit crops - it also improves fruit quality, at least in strawberries. Strawberry plants can self-pollinate, or be pollinated by wind or bees. Björn Klatt of the University of Göttingen in Germany and his colleages grew the fruit using a permeable plastic to eliminate bee and wind pollination, or fine-mesh bags to exclude just bees. They found that the berries grown uncovered but pollinated by bees were heavier, redder, and had a longer shelf life and a more desirable sugar to acid ratio than wind or self-pollinated berries. The researchers say that bee-pollination boosts hormonal growth regulators that improve the quality of the berries.

*Unabbreviated article from ‘Nature’ vol 504, 12 December 2013, contributed by Tony Johnson*

**A bee colony in a petrol tank in the Caribbean heat**

The note (in our February Newsletter) about cooling hives in Australia reminds me of a visit to Nevis in the Caribbean some years ago.  I met up with a friend of Clive De Bruyn’s, Quinten Henderson, who was ‘the beeman’ on the island.  He showed me a wild colony that was well established in an old car petrol tank in full sun.  The only opening was the filler cap.  I can’t imagine what the temperature would have been inside.  It illustrates the astonishing ability of bees to ventilate their environment.

Bob Maurer – Reigate division

**News from ‘Down Under’**

Bruce Murchie has sent us a copy of *News* from the Melbourne Section of the Victorian Apiarist Association – essentially the equivalent of our newsletter. It is interesting to see that beekeeping and its associated activities are essentially the same world-wide. I have copied two extracts from it below, the index and a flyer for an “upcoming event” - a Beekeeping and Honey Festival:

**Features**

2 Beekeeping Equipment

4 Swarm Chaser

8 Sustainable Living Festival at CCF Apiary

**Upcoming Events**

10 Collingwood Children’s Farm Apiary

10 Beekeeping and Honey Festival

10 VAA Bendigo Branch Annual Pack Down Day

10 2014 VAA Annual Conference

10 2014 AHBIC Annual Conference

**Bee News**

11 Beekeepers AFL Tipping Competition

12 Federal Government Senate Beekeeping Inquiry The Victorian Apiarists’ Association Inc

**VAA Melbourne**

13 Monthly Meetings March 27th Photo Competition

15 Contact Details

**Beekeeping and Honey Festival**

Sunday March 16th 2014 10am- 4pm

at Jadran Social Club 35 Duncan’s Lane Diggers Rest 3427 Melway 352 G11

• Beekeeping demonstrations

• Glass sided beehive

• Bee beard (weather permitting)

• Honey tasting and sales

• Mead and honey liqueur-tasting and sales

• Sales of beekeeping equipment

• Sales of propolis

• Various other attractions, including a live band

• Admission $3, children free

• Lunch, cakes, tea, coffee and drinks available

• Enquiries: *contact details given for three members*

*Thank you Bruce for this insight into an Australian BKA. If anyone would like a copy of this newsletter, please contact Bruce or me. – Ed.*

**How 80 000 bees printed a letter for Dewars**

*David Smith has sent the following:*

Thought you may be interested in this experiment in 3DB printing and whisky.

<http://www.fastcocreate.com/1683350/how-80000-bees-printed-a-bottle-for-dewars#1>

**Beekeeping holidays**

We have received details of these holidays in:

Slovenia: info@apiroutes.com

and Grenada, Turkey, Vietnam, Trinidad & Tobago: safari@beesfordevelopment.org

**The wonder of woodwork**

Jane Hunter has sent in an amusing account of her first experience of assembling hive brood boxes. Despite problems with glue, fractions, worries about the neighbours and having to deconstruct the whole thing, she was surprised to find that the finished boxes looked pretty similar to brood boxes everywhere. Now, she writes, for the supers. For the full story, see the attachment.

*Ah well, Jane, you won’t have to pay the charge for buying them fully assembled. – Ed.*

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| **Dates for your diary** |
|  | March | Starting very soon | Basic Assessment Study Group | p. 2 |
| Saturday | 8th March | All day | Beekeeping Course, Pulborough | Nov. p. 3 |
| Saturday | 8th March | 10.30 – 4.30pm | BBKA Special Interest Day (Varroa)NBC, Stoneleigh | p. 4 |
| Tuesday | 11th March | 7.30 - 9.30pm | Winter Meeting, David Rudland, Bee Diseases | p. 1 |
| Wednesday | 12th March | 12.30 & 5pm | Adult Bee Diseases Training Course | Feb. p. 2 |
| Wednesday | 2nd April | 7.30pm | Winter Meeting, Jonah Chitolie, Pollen and bee nutrition | p. 2 |
| Friday, Saturday and Sunday | 4th 5th and 6th April | 3 days | BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University, Shropshire | Feb. p. 2  |
| Friday | 7th April | 7.15 for 7.30pm | Meridian BKA Varroa talk, Bishop Waltham | p.3 |
|  Monday | 26th May | All day | Surrey County Show, Honey Show | p. 4 and Schedule |
| Thursday, Friday, Saturday | 5th-7th June | 3 days | South of England Show, Ardingly | Details later |
| Thursday-Saturday | October 30th – November 1st | 3 days | National Honey Show, Weybridge | Jan. p. 6 |
| Saturday | November 15th | 2.30pm | Weybridge Division AGM | Details later |
| Saturday | December 6th |  | SBKA AGM, Reigate | Details later |

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