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

***Editorial***

Hopefully your bees are enjoying the strong honey flow that we are currently having in our area. As ever, we were surprised by its sudden appearance following a period of a few weeks when we had to watch the bees’ stores situation very carefully indeed, having to feed to avoid the starvation that at least one member experienced during June. Always a tricky balance situation to feed at this time of year if you don’t have spare honey and have to use sugar. We don’t want the food inspectors finding sugar in our jars labelled honey. The flow will certainly have stopped before the issue of the next newsletter, so do remember to close down entrances, and check for gaps in and between boxes before the robbers get to work. The bees will also need help with wasps, though I certainly see no need for the use of wasp traps… a pretty dismal end for the wasps who have served our gardeners so well earlier in the year.

**Teaching Apiary Manager still needed.....................**

Many offers of help in the teaching apiary have been forthcoming but we are still waiting for someone to take on the management role. Someone with good organisational abilities is needed to co-ordinate the activities. Vast beekeeping experience is not essential as we have a wealth of experience within the division. If you are considering it please contact myself or any committee member to discuss the pleasures that await you in this rewarding role!

Thank you, Sandra 01932 244326 (committee members are listed at the end of the newsletter)

**Apiary meeting at Garsons Farm, Sunday 13th July, 2.30 pm**

Peter Bowbrick has kindly offered to host the next meeting at Garsons Farm, Winterdown Road, Esher KT10 8LS. Peter is a very experienced beekeeper and was for several years a Bee Inspector in our area; his meetings are always informative and well worth attending. Please bring a plate of food to share at a picnic afterwards. Tea and coffee will be provided, but a mug and a flask of hot water would be useful.

To park your car, drive round and then straight through the car park, keeping the buildings to your right. Look for the beekeeper to direct you on!

Please let Sue Lawes know if you intend to come along - either phone 01932 843209 or email slawes@hotmail.co.uk.

Sue Lawes

**Painshill Park Bee Festival, Sunday, 20th July, 11am – 4pm**

Plans are now well under way for this Festival, which has been publicised much more widely than the usual annual Bee Day. It will be a bigger event this year as there will be participation from several other Surrey BKA Divisions, as well as stalls selling cosmetics, etc., honey tasting, two observation hives, a children’s book stall where there will be readings of a new bee book, and more.

Most of the displays that Geoff and I usually provide will be there, this time acting as the Weybridge Division contribution as well as highlighting our own involvement as the Painshill Beekeepers. We are grateful to those who have already offered their help to us, but would be very pleased to hear from others who are prepared to spend some time talking to visitors. It is not necessary to have great beekeeping knowledge for this – just a lot of enthusiasm (NB this year’s Course Students…).

Unless you are selling or exhibiting, entry will be via the main visitor entrance, which is in Between Streets (A245) just the Cobham town side of the small roundabout where the A307 goes to Esher, not the gate near the Sainsbury’s roundabout. The usual charge will be made if visiting the Park, but entry to the bee event is free, so do come with all your friends and family. Thank you, Marion C.

**Report of Nosema Clinic, 4th June**

Weybridge Division organised a highly successful Nosema clinic at St Peter’s Church Hall with 15 members providing 45 samples of bees. I think credit for this idea is due to our new secretary Anne Miller and treasurer Michael Main, with full backup from Marion, Geoff, Rob, Vicky, Sandra, Stuart *(and Jim. –Ed.).*

Lovely cakes and tea were provided by Chris despite suffering from a nasty prior accident. She is a very nice and resilient person and we wish her a speedy recovery.

Nosema testing involves crunching up the abdomens of samples of thirty dead bees in water, making a suspension and then examining under the microscope. Everybody is in a hurry for the results but it needs a period of about 15 minutes for the slide cover to settle so the film on the slide is very thin and an accurate picture appears.

The results roughly copy the results of a Nosema clinic we held at home a couple of years ago i.e. 60-70% positive. The table of results indicates 38% high Nosema infection which if accurate is quite worrying. In the many years I have been testing I found about 60% positive but very, very few would I consider to be high and nobody has reported the loss of a colony following a high result.

The most practical way of minimising Nosema build up is giving the bees new comb each year using one of the simple techniques such as Bailey comb change. I would only consider the shook swarm technique if the situation was really desperate with a high Varroa count on top of Nosema.

Once again I would like to thank all who gave generously of their time and expertise.

Jim Joyce

Here is the table of results prepared by Anne, who also sends her thanks to everyone, with this comment:

“I have a few ideas to help it run even smoother next time, but if you have any suggestions,  please let me know.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Amount of Nosema found | nil | low | med | high | total |
| Number of samples | 11 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 45 |
| % of total | 24% | 18% | 20% | 38% |   |

*If any other members have checked their bees, please let me have the results. Thank you, Ed.*

**Report of garden meeting on 7th June 2014 at David Brassington and Jane Weisz house in Sheerwater**

As we arrived for the meeting the clouds rolled back, having rained on and off all morning, and it turned into a fine sunny afternoon; 12 members attended and one extra joined us for tea. The meeting started with a tour of swarm sites around the garden. There had been 8 swarms in a 4-week period, 4 from one colony! David, now short of equipment, wants to consolidate his colonies back to 4 or at most 5 to go through the winter.

We then went through two colonies that David thought were drone layers, one in a nuc and the other in a brood and a half hive. The general consensus was that they were drone laying queens rather than laying workers. Discussion took place as to what should be done with such colonies. It was decided that as these were drone laying queens the queen should be destroyed and the colony then united to a queen right colony. Had it been a laying worker the whole colony would have been destroyed or shaken out 100 yards from any colony and allowed to disperse.

Next we inspected a colony that had been united 2 days before using the newspaper method. The process had been successful and the colony was re-arranged to put all brood in the lower brood box.

We were then led through the garden fence to visit Bernie’s Apiary next door. No bees were inspected but the Escallonia in the garden was seen to be a good bee plant.

We then watched a demonstration of weighing a colony using travel scales before adjourning for an excellent tea. During tea a frame cleaning contraption was demonstrated with a description of how it should be constructed and also a costing. It was just a shame that more members were unable to attend an excellent meeting. Michael Main

**Excellent cheap gloves for beekeepers from an ethical source**

TRAIDcraft supply an outdoor rubber glove, thicker than a Marigold.  They are waterproof and made from triple coated natural latex with cotton lining for comfort. They have gauntlets as do conventional beekeepers’ gloves.  Easily washable and in line with the new BBKA advice. Perfect for using and keeping clean.  They come in both medium and large sizes.

<http://www.ethicalsuperstore.com/search/gloves/>.  One of our members has an Aunt who is a TRAIDcraft representative and thus can offer the gloves at only £3.75 a pair (£4.10 on the website) and with cheaper postage of only £2.80 for one or two pairs **saving members £1.30** for a single pair.  I showed a pair at the garden meeting in June. Marion/Geoff also have a pair if you would like to see them.  If you would like to order please email:  Sue at dgslade@gmail.com and she can arrange payment and dispatch.

David Parker davidparker@polymathconsulting.com

**A good website to visit**

As many of you will know, our member Tim Hutchinson is a bee farmer, who is running a full-time bee business with his wife, Sally. Details of their products can be seen on beehappyproducts.co.uk, and beekeeping information, with a blog, on beehappyproducts.com.

**Bees and Nucleus colonies for sale**

Due to an allergic reaction to bees I am, after a very enjoyable one year, having to give up beekeeping.  I am thus selling all my bees and equipment.  I will list more equipment for sale in the next newsletter but if you need anything quickly do email me as I will probably have it for sale.  For sale now, with pick up near Woking, are:

**2x Nucs of Bees**

Two strong five frame national Nucs of bees.  Bees and Nucs being sold; both nucs are home made from 18mm OSB, undercoat and breathable white exterior paint, mesh floors, crown board, roof with 2mm aluminium on top/ventilation holes built in, both also come with ekes high enough to take a 4-pint feeder, but 3mm walls so not too wide.  2014 Queens. £125 each.

All Equipment is National and was either new or fully refurbished by myself including scorching, sanding etc. and treating with Linseed Oil or in a few cases breathable paint.  All with metal runners.

**Bees: Hive 1**

Very strong full brood box, plus one super, metal roof, crown board, mesh floor, entrance block all frames new 2014 as one of my own Prime Swarms, 2014 Queen. £195 ono.

**Bees: Hive 2**

Strong brood and half (mostly new frames), 2014 Queen created through Snelgrove method, solid floor homemade brand new, super – all new frames, perspex crown board a bit scratched, metal roof £215.

**Bees: Hive 3**

One brood box, plus one super, metal roof, crown board, mesh floor, entrance block, all frames new 2014 as early swarm this year, 2014 Queen. £185 ono, Windlesham Apiary.

Other equipment that will be for sale includes Nuc Boxes, Supers, Box Comb supers, Brood boxes, Queen Excluders, Heated uncapping tray, Frames, Foundation and tools.  David Parker, 07712079307, davidparker@polymathconsulting.com

*This is a sad end to David’s beekeeping, after a very enthusiastic start. We wish him well as he goes for desensitization.*

**Colonies and nucleus colonies for sale**

Astrid Bowers-Veenman, who has requested to become one of our members next year, has 6-frame nucs and an 11-frame national colony for sale at the following prices:

The 6 frame nucs are £110 plus a £20 deposit for a Paynes Poly Nuc box which can be returned or kept, and the 11 frame National is £140. Hive parts to be returned after transfer to purchaser’s own hive.

Please contact Astrid Bowers-Veenman, Ash Green (between Guildford and Farnham, just off the Hogs Back A31) 01252 330229 07803 069798 astrid@coginternational.co.uk

**Nucleus colonies for sale**

Epsom's queen rearing project has a number of 5/6 frame nucs available for sale to members of Surrey BKA at a price of £125 each (to include a marked 2014 queen and 5/6 frames of brood and stores). Nucs are to be collected by arrangement from EBKA's apiary at Ewell.

Anyone interested in purchasing a nuc should contact David Jones by email  dej7ld@gmail.com or phone 020 8643 5438.

**Queen bees for sale**

We have received details of the following introductory offer for British Black, locally reared queen bees:

mature queen bee cells £5; virgin queen bee £10; mated and marked queen bee £23

The first two can be picked up from **Bertalan Lorincz**

**Local honey prices**

For members’ information, last year I sold all my honey to the local fishmonger at £5 / lb in 1 lb jars.

I have just agreed with him that this year it will be £5 for a 12 oz jar (=£6.33 / lb, a 33% increase). The reason for this is simply - in his own words - that the honey draws people into his shop, so he doesn’t really care how much he pays for it!!

*The contributor wishes to remain anonymous. It is helpful to all of us to be in touch with local honey prices. Please continue to supply yours. It’s fine if you, too, would prefer to remain anonymous – Ed.*

**Anaphylactic Shock/First Aid Training**

We are looking into the possibility of organising a course to raise awareness of emergency treatments that the public could carry out in situations such as anaphylactic shock, stroke, heart attack and general first aid.

The course would last for 4 hours and be delivered by a qualified nurse whose specialties lies in A&E, Occupational Health/safety and accident prevention. The cost would be £30 per person and would require a minimum of 6 people to attend to make it viable to run (max 15).

If you would consider attending this, please could you email me liz.knee@googlemail.com so we can gauge level interest before we make any firm arrangements.

Liz Knee (SBKA Education Committee)

**Northern Bee Books**

While many of your members will purchase bee books from their local bookshop - or Amazon, you and your members may be interested in the new site  [www.northernbeebooks.co.uk](http://www.northernbeebooks.co.uk/)  - just launched by Northern Bee Books. It lists a very wide selections of titles.

Jeremy Burbidge, **NORTHERN BEE BOOKS** | [www.northernbeebooks.co.uk](http://www.northernbeebooks.co.uk/) | T: +44(0)1422 882751

Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge HX7 5JS

View *The Beekeepers Quarterly* [HERE](http://www.bkqonline.co.uk/)

**US sets up honeybee task force**

David Parker has drawn our attention to this article on the BBC website dated 20th June which also says that The Environmental Protection Agency will lead the effort which includes $8m (£4.7m) for new honeybee habitats. David writes “could ask if the UK government will follow”.

**Extrafloral nectaries**

The other day I noticed a honey bee systematically visiting the LEAVES of a wild-type Fuchsia in our garden. It’s fairly common to observe bees going to the nectaries on the leaves of cherry laurel, but I’d never seen them on Fuchsia before.

Has anyone else seen this, or seen bees visit the leaves of other plants? Please let the Editor know if you have – I’ll make sure he puts your response in the next newsletter. Quite a few plants have these nectaries, but it’s not often you see them actually being used for forage.

Marion C.

**A success story**

A few weeks ago at the Teaching Apiary we had the pleasure of watching virgin queens emerge from their queen cells. Although we didn’t need a new queen at home, I decided to take one. From the North Devon Beekeepers website - often a useful resource - I read this: *The introduction of virgin queens is difficult, with a low success rate: so low as to be zero in most cases.* Encouraged by this, I decided to try…

We shook some bees from a brood frame into a small bowl, agitated the bowl gently to make any flying bees take off, then sprayed the remaining ones (now mainly nurse bees) with a fine mist of water, and tipped them into a prepared Apidea (mini-nuc box). We gave the queen the same water spray treatment, through the sides of the queen cage in which she had been carried, then released her on top of the heap of slightly damp bees in the box. The idea of spraying was to mask the different odours of the bees and the queen. The result? A colony building up nicely in a 14 x 12 brood box and a very happy me.

Given suitable conditions it’s not, in fact, that hard to introduce virgin queens, but the above method was so easy and satisfying that I thought I’d explain it – and recommend it.

Marion C.

**More on the neonicotinoid debate**

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-27980344. The writers of this 4-year review of ‘hundreds’ of peer-reviewed papers do not appear to be a pressure group and seem to have prepared a very significant case comparing the potential effects of neonicontinoids with the long banned DDT.

**Possible UK Derogation on the use of a neonicotinoid on oil seed rape**

You may have read in the press or been contacted and requested to sign a petition concerning an application made by Syngenta to obtain derogation from the UK government to enable them to use their active substance (thiamethoxam) on oil seed rape *(this petition has been drawn to our attention by several of our members –Ed)*. This had been reported as the UK government seeking to break the EU wide ban on the use of neonicotinoids.

We understand that the company made an application for a limited use of the product because of problems in the control of flea beetle on oil seed rape. Flea beetle is also resistant to pyrethroid insecticides which are an alternative choice to neonicotinoids for the control of flea beetle.

In order to obtain the derogation the company has to go through the specified regulatory process including the Chemicals Regulations Directorate, the Advisory Committee on Pesticides before Ministers consider granting permission.

We do not know the precise nature of the derogation being sought (for example it may be for limited geographical areas or there may be additional product stewardship requirements to be met).

We understand a number of other EU countries either have already granted derogations or are considering applications for derogation.

We will communicate further information as soon as we receive it.

David Aston (Chair BBKA Technical and Environmental Committee), 26 June 2014

*The whole question of the effects of insecticides and herbicides on the environment and on our special interest, honey bees, is impossibly difficult for lay people, incuding beekeepers, to assess accurately, given the extremely biased and conflicting information presented by pressure groups and the chemical industry.*

*I am not sure that government experts are a very good guide either, with their own peculiar restraints and motives. I think that all we, as individuals, can do is to try to keep well informed, and make the effort to come to some thought-out conclusions. Quite often common sense and gut feeling can help us to negotiate the incredible balance( impossible even to experts?) between feeding the world and ruining the environment.-Ed.*

**Gear wheels in an insect**

A member has expressed an interest in seeing a picture of these gear wheels reported in the May newsletter, so this has been included as an attachment. I think you will find it astonishing. More evidence of the extraordinary nature of the planet on which we find ourselves.

**Kent Festival of bees**

This free of charge event is held every August near Canterbury and is aimed at encouraging people to find out more about the world of bees and beekeeping. As well as a fun family festival, there is also a bee produce and honey show, where members are welcome to exhibit. Throughout the day there will be seminars, beekeeping demonstrations and many unique show offers from MannLake UK who are sponsoring the day. There will also be hands-on craft activities, refreshments and stalls selling bee-related products. This year’s festival will be held from 10am to 4pm on Bank Holiday Monday 25th August.

More information about the classes and how to enter can be found on the website: <http://www.kent-festival-of-bees.co.uk/>

We are also currently recruiting volunteer stewards for the day, if any of your members are interested in helping out. All stewards are given lunch and a £30 Mann Lake equipment voucher. Call or email Angela Standen at Mann Lake UK for more details: Tel -

 Ellie Philpott PR Manager Mann Lake UK

*Thanks to Andrew Halstead for passing on this notice.*

**BIBBA Conference**

We have received notice that the 50th annual conference of the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders’ Association will be hosted by the South Clwyd Beekeepers’ Association at The Pavilion, Llangollen, North Wales on 26-28 September. The programme can be seen here: www.bibba.com/conference\_2014.php and booking can be done here: http://goo.gl/uCBLf8

**Arthritis or a bee in the bonnet?**

The generally accepted folk lore that bee venom is helpful in the prevention of arthritis is questioned in an article that Sandra Rickwood has unearthed in an old (February 2000) *Daily Telegraph* newspaper cutting. It reports that *The Journal of Rheumatology* and the medical magazine *Monitor* have reviewed the evidence that arthritis is an occupational hazard for beekeepers. Rheumatologists conducted a survey in a village near Madrid where beekeeping is the main occupation. A medical team investigated 34 beekeepers who had acute or chronic arthritis. Sufferers were subjected to a physical examination, X-rays and a blood test. The doctors found that beekeepers initially developed acute arthritis when honey gathering and that after many years it became chronic. Fifty percent of the village developed arthritis with the most affected joints being nearest the stings. However, biopsies of the joints showed non-specific inflammatory changes and the blood results were similarly unremarkable. The team could only suppose that the arthritis might have been the reaction to bee venom, trauma or infection – interesting but not very conclusive.

**You know you’re beekeeper when ….**

Do have a read of the list of amusing and truthful responses that you will find in the attachment.

*Thanks to Sally Hutchinson, who found it on her Facebook page.*

**A request for ideas**

*Chris Burnett writes:*

This is just a note to request that if anyone has any more bright ideas, like the one using a wall paper stripper to melt the wax on used frames, please could they come forward.

**Committee Members**

Chairman: Andrew Halstead ahalstead44@btinternet.com

Secretary: Anne Miller wbks\_secretary@outlook.com

Treasurer: Michael Main michael\_main@talktalk.net

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Sandra Rickwood: sandrarickwood@btinternet.com

Debbie Ware: debbieware2@gmail.com

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Sunday | 13th July | 2.30pm | Apiary Meeting, Garson Farm, Esher, Peter Bowbrick | p. 1 |
| Sunday | 20th July | 11.00-4.00 | Bee Event, Painshill Park, Cobham | p. 1 |
| Saturday  | 16th August | 2.30pm | Garden Meeting, Gil Bray | Details later |
| Monday | 25th August |  | Kent Festival of Bees, Canterbury | p. 6 |
| Fri - Sun | 26-28 September |  | BIBBA Conference, North Wales | p. 6 |
| Thursday-Saturday | October 30th – November 1st | 3 days | National Honey Show, Weybridge | April p. 6Details later |
| Saturday | November 15th | 2.30pm | Weybridge Division AGM | Details later |
| Saturday | December 6th |  | SBKA AGM, Reigate | Details later |

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