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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISIONNEWSLETTER: January 2015 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***Editorial***

The theory part of our annual beekeeping course for beginners is starting for the 6th successive year on Monday 12th January. Over a dozen people have signed up for the course, and several have already shown great enthusiasm in finding out about bees and beekeeping. Weybridge division has still had no volunteers to take over the role of Teaching Apiary Manager, a role which Sandra has carried out for the last 5 years. We are extremely grateful to her for doing this essential work. The students would be quite unable to continue learning beekeeping without following the theory with sound practice with real bees. So do give this some more thought and if you are interested in taking on this important work, do contact Sandra, me or any member of the committee. It should be emphasised that it is not necessary for the Manager to do everything alone – help is always forthcoming; it is primarily an organising, overseeing, role.

**Winter Meeting, Wednesday, 14th January, 7.30pm**

This is a reminder that our first meeting of the new year will take place in St Peter’s Church Hall, 1 Burwood Road, Hersham, KT12 4AA. The speaker we have invited is Heather Hawker, who is currently Master of the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers, which has had close links with beekeepers thoughout its long history. This meeting is not directly about beekeeping so has a wider appeal than some and would therefore be suitable for members’ families and friends – do invite them to join us.

Marion C.

**Questionnaire – your views on Weybridge Division are requested**

If you have not already done so, please complete this and return to Michael Main as soon as you can. Thank you. The Questionnaire is attached again, for your convenience.

**Another source of supply of fondant**

It is that time of year when bees may need some feeding... Bako fondant can be ordered from Paul Williams from Bako South Eastern Ltd.

The Bako fondant comes in 12.5 kg boxes and the price is £9.25 delivered for one or more boxes. There is no sliding scale in pricing. Orders for 25 boxes or more can be offered at a slightly lower price.

I ordered from Paul last year and I have just placed an order again. He was happy for me to share this price and his contact details with other Weybridge Association members. His mobile No. is 07530 997468.

Astrid Bowers-Veenman

**Bargain hive tin roofs, and mesh for floors**

I am not wanting to promote any one supplier but I recently spoke to Simon The Beekeeper; he has some tin roofs a few mm smaller than the standard but still big enough for National Hives that he did at £5 each for 5 or more and also had offcuts of thick mesh big enough for the floors of nucs, also at a very good price.  Feel free to mention my name but I thought these were good prices, neither are on the website or ebay so you will need to call me. David Parker (davidparker@polymathconsulting.com)

**Mann Lake UK: New Hybrid Hive & low prices**

David Parker has also drawn our attention to these items. Please find attached pictures and prices.

For any to whom Mann Lake is a new name, this is a large American supplier of beekeeping equipment which has recently established a base in the UK, and had a stand at the 2014 National Honey Show. It appears to have the capacity to become a serious rival to Thornes.

**High varroa populations this winter; a micro analysis of my results with some conclusions (a follow-up to notes in several previous newsletters)**

The following figures are a summary collated from details recorded from my 10 monitored colonies:

* average daily mite drop over several days up to 13/9/14: 1 – 43
* *Apivar* strips inserted 14/9/14 or 15/9/14
* mite drop during the 24 hours after inserting *Apivar* strips: 5 – 494
* *Apivar* strips removed 24/11/2014
* average daily mite drop over a week up to 17/12/14: 8 colonies nil; 1 colony 1; 1 colony 2

One or two colonies had been treated earlier in the season, as necessary, so that the mite drops during summer had been kept below the acceptable limits. It was therefore a great surprise to find such high varroa levels so late in the year.

I have drawn the following conclusions which I hope will be found of practical use in the future:

* raised awareness of the need to monitor later into autumn than I have in the past
* *Apivar* strips are a very good choice for autumn varroa control, especially useful if a mild autumn is expected (as it leads to the production of much brood and hence high mite population for the following spring) as they can be left in the hive for 10 weeks
* MAQS strips may not be a good choice for use in autumn as they should be in the hive for one week only
* *Apivar* is very effective at knocking down mites, and we are told that resistance to its active ingredient (Amitraz) has not yet been detected
* *Apivar* is easily obtained by post (from a beekeeper vet in Scotland) and is priced about the same as other varroacides
* careful choice must be made of the most suitable varroacide to use, having regard to time of year
* we need to be aware of the types of varroa control materials that are available

I am very fortunate that unwittingly I chose to use *Apivar,* for the first time, just before an unusual autumn/winter. It would not have been so good had I chosen my alternative for a first use, ie MAQS strips as they must be removed from the hive after only one week. Everything is not against us after all!

You will appreciate that this report attempts to summarise a great deal of data; should any wish for more detail, do get in touch with me.

Geoff Cooper

**Anaphylaxis & AAI Management For Beekeepers, a Surrey BKA Training Day conducted by Andrea Woolley - Nurse Practitioner, 6th and 21st February**

Andrea Woolley is a nurse with direct experience of doing CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and has suffered anaphylaxis to wasp venom, so she brings to her training a quiet authority and high professionalism. There will be the opportunity to put the skills learnt into practice to ensure those attending leave with the confidence of knowing what to do in a medical emergency.

## Full details of this event, which will take place at Epsom Division’s premises in Ewell will be found in the attachment.

*It is necessary that we all have a reasonable knowledge of this topic; it is so important to beekeepers. We have here an excellent opportunity to obtain the information regarding its recognition and treatment. – Ed.*

**Nosema Testing - Is It Really Necessary? (An Article By Rob Chisholm)**

Prior to the use of Fumidil-B being prohibited both in Europe and the UK the accepted practice for the treatment of Nosema was to test the colony in late summer and if found incorporate Fumidil-B into the autumn feed. Incidentally Fumidil-B was never a cure, it did however keep the infection under control until the spring when the bees could be transferred onto clean comb and complete the treatment. However, unfortunately like many bee medications, Fumidil-B was frequently misused by lazy beekeepers, rather than testing first they used it as a prophylactic, this practice probably caused traces of it to appear in honey and thus be withdrawn. Following the loss of Fumidil-B to beekeepers, numerous other products have appeared on the market purporting to treat Nosema, but as they are really only dietary supplements, in my opinion, none of them are effective replacements.

From the foregoing it became apparent to me that a different approach was needed, not only was *Nosema apis* affecting the bees, but possibly a new infection *Nosema ceranae* was even more potentially damaging. I therefore decided to go back to first principles and consider what was known about Nosema:-

1. The infection is carried in the bees’ gut and proliferates on old soiled comb, particularly during the winter when the bees cannot get out to defecate.
2. The infection will naturally lessen when the flying bees defecate away from the hive.
3. Nosema infection reduces the life span of a worker bee by about 50%, therefore winter bees will last 3 months and summer bees only 3 weeks. This will seriously affect spring build up, potential honey crop and could easily lead to the demise of the colony.

Considering these facts, it became apparent that somewhat drastic spring and later colony management would be required to combat this infection. In the spring, neither replacing a few old combs or indeed even a “Bailey Comb Change” was likely to provide a consistent outcome. After all, unless all the old comb is replaced, the bees are still tending brood and feeding on that comb and potentially spreading the infection. I therefore concluded that “Shook Swarming” should become part of my normal spring management programme, this way I would not only combat Nosema but also rid the colony of about 95% of inherent Varroa Mites. Finally, after extracting the honey at the end of the season, any combs that have previously contained brood and have been manipulated into the supers are destroyed.

Using this programme for the last three years I can honestly say the incidence of Nosema infection has at best been non-existent, at worst very low and the colonies generally extremely productive, “healthy bees gather more honey”.

Over the last two years I have slightly modified my spring “Shook Swarming” technique, instead of destroying all the brood comb, I leave one frame of open brood in the hive for a further week or so to pick up any remaining Varroa Mites adhering to the bees, they will be desperate to get into that brood to continue their reproductive cycle. When that comb is then destroyed you can be sure that you have very likely removed most of the Varroa Mites from the colony.

Finally returning to my original question – “Is Nosema Testing Really Necessary?” I would say that using this manipulation probably not. However I accept that many beekeepers will continue to test but this must now be done in the early spring so that something can be done to rectify the situation if Nosema is found.

*In the email from Rob that accompanied this article, he commented that it ‘*may generate some feedback’. *Please send any comments to me as well as to Rob, so that they can go into the Newsletter. –Ed.*

December 2014

**Beetle Blaster - A device to control (detect) Small Hive Beetles**

Following last month’s Newsletter item and an article in the current *BeeCraft*, it has occurred to me that it would be a good idea if we all obtained at least one (or more) of these devices (for about £1.50 each) and installed it in a hive (or more than one) for detecting SHB in our apiary. Apart from our own interest, this could assist Fera to detect the arrival of this beetle at the earliest possible date.

Geoff Cooper

**A really good article on US CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder)**

David Parker has brought to our attention an article that he described in the above terms, and having read it I agree with him. It should be helpful to all beekeepers, both new and experienced. I very much like the balanced view that it presents of the whole CCD issue. You can read it in the following link: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/quora/why-are-bees-disappearing_b_6304112.html?utm_hp_ref=green>

**South Eastern Region Annual Report 2014 from National Bee Unit**

Our new Regional Bee Inspector, Julian Parker, has sent his first Annual Report. There is much information some of which is of more interest to hobby beekeepers than other. Perhaps of most importance to us is another warning of the possible imminence of the arrival in our hives of the Small Hive Beetle and the Asian Hornet. Our lives seems to demand more and more bits of paper that we are told we must read; however I do suggest that you find a few minutes to scan this document – see attachment. It is certainly of interest to all of us beekeepers.

**Surrey BKA AGM**

The minutes of this meting, held in December, will be included in a newsletter when they become available.

**Closing dates for applying for BBKA assessments and exams**

Full details of these dates and related topics will be found on the attachment. Please note these carefully and apply in good time.

Thank you, Celia Perry (SBKA Examinations Secretary)

**An article on why honey is often used for flavouring drinks**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-30295762>

Thanks to David Parker for bringing this to our attention.

**A scented postal service**

Graham McGuire has sent us a delightful cutting from a Tahiti magazine in which the release of a new stamp that ‘has the fragrance of honey’ is announced. Various culinary and religious uses of honey are described in the article that accompanies a picture of the stamp. If anyone woud like to see the whole thing, please let me know and I will forward Graham’s email to you. *–Ed.*

**West Sussex BKA Convention, Saturday 28th February**

Dear Neighbouring Beekeeping Associations,

I attach for your information details of our Annual Convention in February which may be of interest to your members.

Full details are available on our website at [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html)

We look forward to welcoming as many of your members as possible to the Lodge Hill Centre in Pulborough.

Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Successful New Beekeeping Year.

Graham

Sec WSBKA

The booking form is attached as a pdf document; a Word document of the Form can be found on the WSBKA website.

**eBay sales of chemical products that are not authorised for use in the UK**

Peter Webb has drawn our attention to eBay sellers’ advertising of products banned on the UK market. In a reply to Peter, Dr Sarah Dutton of the Health & Safety Executive Chemicals Regulation Directorate wrote: ‘So far this year, we have had a number of plant protection products containing neonicotinoids removed from eBay. If you are aware of any other such products, please send specific details of the product(s) to our compliance account ([CRD.PPP.compliance@HSE.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CRD.PPP.compliance@HSE.gsi.gov.uk)) so that we can investigate the matter further.’

**News of members**

We are sorry to announce the death of two of our members: Colin Heath, who lived in Hersham and John Hilton in Staines. We send our condolences to their families and friends at this sad time.

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | |
| Monday | January 12th | 7.30-9.30pm | Beginners’ Course starts |  |
| Wednesday | January 14th | 7.30pm | Winter Meeting:  Heather Hawker – Wax Chandlers | p. 1 and  Oct. p. 1 |
| Saturday | January 17th | Full details given on attachment | Training preparation for the General Husbandry module | Dec. p. 2 |
| Friday | January 23rd | 7.30-10.30pm | Quiz and Fish and Chips Supper, Guildford | Dec. p. 3 |
| Saturday | January 31st | 1-day course | Bee Improvement | Nov. p. 3 |
| Sunday and Monday | February 1st and 2nd | 9.30am to 5.30pm | Making beeswax products  Wisborough Green | Dec. p. 4 |
| Friday | February 13th | 7.30pm | Short presentations by members | Oct. p. 1 |
| Saturday | February 28th | 9.30am-4.30pm | West Sussex BKA Convention, Pulborough | p. 3 |
| Wednesday | March 11th | 7.30pm | Alan Rudland – Bee diseases | Oct. p. 1 Details later |
| Wednesday | March 25th | 7.30pm | Michael Main - Swarms | Oct. p. 2  Details later |

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