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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISION NEWSLETTER: March 2015 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***Editorial***

If most past years are any guide, I suppose we shall soon be saying something like, “The bees have caught us out again.” They have certainly shown a few very active days in February with so much pollen going in that I wondered if the queens were heavily stocking the brood nest with eggs and hence larvae and sealed brood. They quietened down again but I was able to find a warm day so had a very quick look in some of the hives. There was certainly some brood in all stages but not a great deal. So we continue to be at the ready to handle the sudden rush of spring activity, brood raising, and risk of swarming. Yet another new beginning for us to enjoy this “study of a fairytale” and resume our look into “the bottomles well” which indeed our bees are.

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**Reminders**

**Talk on honey bee diseases, their recognition and control. Wednesday March 11th, 7.30 pm**

Do try to attend this important meeting, when our Bee Inspector, David Rudland, will be giving us the latest information. Details in February Newsletter.

**Surrey Bee Day, Saturday 14th March**

Remember to book your ticket for the 10th Surrey Bee Day next week – March 14th to be precise! A full programme with presentations by well known beekeepers and a hot lunch await you.

Email me at rickwoodsbka@gmail.com or telephone 01932 244326. Further details are on the attached flyer and our web site: [http://www.surreybeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.surreybeekeepers.org.uk/)

Sandra Rickwood

**Winter Meeting, March 25th, St Peter’s Church Hall, Hersham – Swarms**

Michael Main will lead this meeting, which will be devoted to swarms and swarming – a good reminder to start the season.

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**Report of Winter Meeting, Friday 13th February: Short presentations by members**

This meeting was attended by about 30 members.

A beautifully illustrated talk on social wasps in Britain (Andrew Halstead) was followed by a demonstration of the shook swarm method of comb change for varroa and nosema control (Rob Chisholm). A talk questioning the need and the possibly negative effects on bees resulting from the use of queen excluders and wax foundation followed (Geoff Cooper). We then watched a demonstration of apparatus for the sublimation of oxalic acid crystals for the control of varroa. The dangers of this material and the need for **good quality** protection were emphasised (Tim Hutchinson), and finally we enjoyed hearing a humorous account of a beekeeper’s experiences in his first years of beekeeping (Brian Foley).

*Richard Hignett has kindly written a very full report on the meeting which is included in this newsletter as*

*an attachment – enjoy your read! -Ed.*

**Report on Anaphylaxis Course at Epsom on 6th and 21st February**

Five Weybridge members attended the recent excellent course on anaphylaxis run by Epsom Beekeepers, at which Andrea Wooley (a Specialist Nurse Practitioner) gave us comprehensive instruction on anaphylaxis, what triggers it, and what actions to take. There were several people attending who had suffered severe shock in the past and one of the most interesting things from their accounts was the fact that despite knowing about anaphylaxis, when it happened to them, none of them was able to phone for help or act in a rational way because of the speed of the shock.

Although rare, it is important that we are all aware of the risk and what to do in the event of a severe reaction to stings. The severity of anaphylactic reactions can be minimized by recognizing the symptoms early, having proper medication available for self treatment and seeking emergency medical care promptly.

Most importantly, we must all think ahead when looking at our bees:

* If you can, always go beekeeping with someone else, or
* Make sure someone knows where you are
* Keep your mobile phone to hand, not inside your jeans pocket, which is inside your bee suit – you won’t be able to get to it quickly enough.
* If you have an EpiPen, carry it with you, don’t leave it in the car (as one person on our course did) and make sure others know about it and how to administer it.

Reacting quickly is key, the actions to take are the same for heart attack or stroke and simple tasks such as putting the person into recovery position and keeping them breathing until the ambulance arrives might save their lives.

Anne Miller

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**Future Events**

**Revision / Preparation Course for beekeepers wishing to take the BBKA Basic Assessment**

This Assessment is well worth taking for a number of reasons. Anyone who has been a beekeeper for at least a year is eligible. The Assessment has practical and theory elements, but no written part. Any who have taken a beginners’ beekeeping course (such as the one run every year by our Division) has enough knowledge to be able to pass the Assessment. Although not essential, it’s a good idea to make definite preparation in the form of a short revision course. One of our own members, Tim Hutchinson, who is a bee farmer, will be running this course, which will consist of four 2-hour sessions plus one practical session. If you would like to take advantage of this specially designed course, please contact Tim on info@beehappyproducts, for further information.

**Nosema Clinic, Wednesday 22nd April 7:30 – 9:30**

**St Peter’s Church Hall, 1 Burwood Road, Hersham KT12 4AA**

****The disease called nosemosis is caused by gut parasites (*Nosema* species). Colonies of severely affected bees dwindle and die, so it is important that we all check for the disease. We have organized an evening for this purpose and would strongly recommend that you take this this opportunity to have your bees checked.

Bee samples can be collected from your colonies at any time now, and placed immediately in a freezer to kill them and keep them in good condition until required; this is important, as decomposing bees are disgusting and such samples will not be checked.

Instructions on how to collect samples are given in an attachment to this newsletter.

Members will bring their bees to the clinic, and then prepare them for sampling under the microscope. The procedure involves separating the abdomens of 30 bees from the rest of their body and grinding them up with 10 ml of water. A drop of the resulting liquid is then transferred to a microscope slide and examined for nosema spores. Some find this procedure quite revolting, while others launch into it with great enthusiasm – either way, it is the only method currently available for diagnosing this potentially serious infection.

The timing of this clinic is appropriate, because May/June (during the so-called June Gap – if there is one) is a time when a comb change (Bailey method or shook swarm) can be done, this being a recommended way of controlling, although obviously not eliminating nosema, as the organism is present within the bees. Comb change, although a drastic disturbance for the bees, is ultimately beneficial and strongly recommended for several other reasons as well as for controlling nosema.

As last year, BDI (Bee Disease Insurance) are offering funding for events aimed at controlling bee diseases – hence their logo here.

Anne Miller

**Auction by Reigate beekeepers, Saturday 11th April**

Further to the notice in the January newsletter, we have now received a flyer giving details of this auction. It is included as an attachment.

**Surrey County Agricultural Show, Guildford 25th May 2015**

Would you like to be a steward in the bee tent at the Surrey Show?

By offering your help you will receive free entry to the show with a free lunch and tea and/or coffee during the day.  It is a great day when you can talk with other beekeepers and share ideas. You will have at least 2 hours free to go around the show as well as time for lunch in the Bee Tent.  The sample menu for lunch is set out on the attached form.  This year we would like to hear from anyone who has children aged between 7 and 16 and who would also like to help on the candle rolling stand.  Many of our customers are children and they like dealing with people of their own age.

Attached is the form for volunteers to help as stewards at the Surrey Show on Monday 25th May 2014.  Please get your applications in to Michael Main by 28th April.

**We would also like to see as many entries into the show classes as possible**.  There is the Vincent Challenge cup which is awarded to the division which achieves the most points from entries as well as the Golder Memorial Trophy awarded to the winner of the Novice Class.  So why not get a group of members to get together and prepare some entries to the show for the first time this year.  The show schedule is also attached.  For every 5 entries a free ticket to the show is supplied and you have the whole day to go around the show.

Michael Main – Chief Steward

**Spring Meeting of the Central Association of Bee-Keepers**

This will be held on Saturday 11th April, 10.30 am - 4.30 pm. Full details are on the attachment. For anyone who has never been to one of these meetings, I would strongly recommend them; the lectures are all of a high standard, the venue is a wildlife ‘haven’ in the middle of London and the lunch is excellent.

Geoff C.

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**Committee Review of Membership Questionnaire**

Firstly thank you to all of you who responded to the membership questionnaire, and to Michael Main who devised it and collated the responses.  The results were considered by the committee and we felt there were some really good ideas.

One idea that was raised by quite a few members was to have a bee improvers’ course for people who have been beekeeping for a few years but who would like to develop their skills.  We would like to pursue this, though it will take some planning but we will keep you advised of progress.

A second expressed an interest in queen rearing and as you will have seen in the last newsletter, Martin Major has already started a small group looking at this.

There were a number of suggestions for things that could be usefully covered in apiary meetings and subjects for winter meetings.  We will work to incorporate as many of these ideas as we can into the apiary meetings for the coming season and for the next series of winter meetings.  There were a number of volunteers to host apiary meetings which was really encouraging and we shall also try to arrange some of these around the periphery of our area.

The question of Buzz Groups arose.  Some members are not in a Buzz Group  and would like to join, but are uncertain of what local groups there are.  An email has gone to all the Buzz Group mentors to ask their permission to put their name, email and postcode on the web site so members can find local groups.  Keep an eye on the web site for details.

There were many more great ideas and your committee will continue to review the suggestions to see what else can be incorporated into our annual programme.

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**Teaching apiary**

A big thank you to all who have helped through the winter cleaning equipment and tidying the apiary. My special thanks to those who came to the working party in December, and to Gil Bray, Dani Lodge and Anne Miller.

Sandra Rickwood

**Nosema Testing - Is it really necessary?**

**(More Feedback on the Article by Rob Chisholm in the January Newsletter)**

*Rob has sent this reply to comments received, including that by Alastair Welch in the February issue:*

I was delighted to receive some comments regarding the above article which I had submitted for the January Newsletter. As I am sure Geoff will agree, it is always gratifying to receive some feedback from other beekeepers. There was one written reply from Alastair Welch, on which I will comment later, and the others were both verbal and similar and are much easier to reply to. The verbal comments concerned retaining the brood frames and adhering bees from the shook swarm in a nucleus hive, allowing it to produce an emergency queen, treating  for Varroa then re-uniting to the swarm. In my opinion a complete waste of time, firstly because the shook swarm would be so depleted of worker bees, the manipulation would fail and probably result in a non-viable colony. Secondly, because you have retained the potentially nosema infected comb, and rather than controlling the disease you are continuing to nurture it.

Regarding Alastair’s opinion that a “Bailey Comb Change” is the better option for treating Nosema, I would agree that when Fumidil B was available it was. However we do not now have this option available to control the infection while the transfer onto clean comb takes place and I believe the sooner the potentially infected comb is removed the better – hence shook swarm. I agree that a “shook swarm” can excite the bees and cause them to defecate, however my experience would indicate this very temporary problem is much less harmful than leaving them on comb with high levels of disease pathogens present. Finally a “Bailey Comb Change” does nothing to reduce the Varroa load on the colony, whilst the modified “shook swarm” manipulation described in my original article certainly will and two significant threats to the health of the colony can be virtually eliminated.

Rob Chisholm

**How to make an Asian Hornet trap**

We have been told of the Fera publication *How to make an Asian Hornet Trap.* I think that we would all do well to consider very seriously acting on this information. The traps described are inexpensive to make and important, as these hornets will be with us sooner or later - probably sooner; there are plenty of them on the other side of the channel. Just click on to the attachment to read the publication; Defra advise us to install the traps in late February – March, i.e. now.

*Thanks to Andrew Halstead for this information.*

**One of our members in a prominent place in the BBKA News**

Just thought I would mention that the photo on the cover of February's BBKA News is one I took last January, of a bee in my garden.  I thought it would cheer up a gloomy month.

Jane Hunter

**Stolen bees in hives – please help**

Could members please look out for the following kit which was stolen from the Barnstable area. Two hives, three jumbo boxes deep, bright blue in colour with a large colony in each. They were supplied by modern bee keeping of Barnstaple, and the bees were native blacks.  All five pieces of each hive (top and bottom pieces) plus the three boxes had  [mooonraker.com](http://mooonraker.com/) burned into  them.

Along with the hives the thieves took a red generator plus various other pieces of beekeeping equipment.  Please contact jamesedwardwyatt@hotmail.co.uk

**Bee charity appeals for a new Chairman**

Bees Abroad is a small UK-based charity that runs a team of project managers who take their beekeeping skills abroad (mainly Africa) to help alleviate poverty. On 23rd April 2015,  Mr John Home will stand down as Chairman to take up another role within our team of Trustees.  This provides a great opportunity for someone else to take over the reins and work with the trustees to steer Bees Abroad into its next phase of development.  We are looking for someone with management skills who can help shape our future, run a great committee and work as part of our team.   This role will be supported by a strong team of trustees who all play their part in running different aspects of the charity, so whoever takes over can be assured of a gentle introduction and lots of help to steer the ship. Attached is a job specification that outlines the role of Chairman.  I was wondering if you would be kind enough to forward this to your members?  Please do ask anyone who may be interested to get in touch.

Veronica Brown, Administrator info@beesabroad.org.uktel:  0117 230 0231

**Honey on tap – the Flow Hive**

Several members have drawn our attention to this new invention which collects honey via a pipe from a hive without the need to remove the supers. It has been developed over a period of 10 years by a father and son team in Australia. I have to say that on first hearing about it, I took it with a pinch of salt. However, having watched the video, it does seem to be a serious invention which is potentially very useful and possibly revolutionary, although it still begs a number of questions to any experienced beekeeper. The details of the video are here:

https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/flow-hive-honey-on-tap-directly-from-your-beehive

**Tobacco as medication for bees?**

In a recent issue of the prestigious *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, researchers from Dartmouth College and the University of Massachusetts report that a natural chemical (an alkaloid, anabasine) found in the flowers of tobacco and some other plants can reduce the level of common bumble bee parasites by more than 80%. It is suggested that tobacco plants are included in pollinator strips planted around fields to provide a ‘natural medicine cabinet’.

The link below is a paper that gives details of how other secondary plant metabolites may reduce the parasite levels of bumble bees; hopefully those of honey bees as well.

*Articles contributed by Peter Webb*

**Another suggested reason for honey bee decline**

Some new research has suggested that “Stressed young bees that are forced to grow up too fast could largely account for disastrous declines in populations of the insects around the world… [bees](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/bees) usually begin foraging at two to three weeks old but when older workers are killed off by disease, lack of food or other factors they have to start younger”.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/feb/10/stressed-young-bees-could-be-cause-of-colony-declines-scientists-find>

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2015/02/04/1422089112>

 *Links contributed by David Parker*

**FOR SALE**

Neither the Newsletter Editor nor Surrey Beekeepers Association take any responsibility for the accuracy of any of the following entries, or for the condition of any of the items advertised. If considering purchasing bees or second hand equipment, the prospective purchaser should take great care to ensure that the bees are not diseased, and that second hand equipment is sterilised before use. Inexperienced purchasers should take a knowledgeable beekeeper with them.

**2015 National Nucs**

Available to pre-order now. Depending on the weather, these will be available from late May/June onwards.

Your nuc will contain the following:

 • 2015 queen marked with this year’s colour (blue). These queens are reared from our own gentle local honey producing stock in Surrey.

 • 5 National Hoffman frames with brood in all stages and stores. The brood and bees will be from the queen supplied with the nuc.

 • Correx Travelling box.

We will keep you informed of when your nuc is expected to be ready. Cash on collection or by bank transfer prior to collection.

All nucs are collection only or local delivery within 5 miles of Chertsey.

Each 2015 nuc is £170.

Unfortunately all our overwintered nucs are spoken for, but if you would like to be added to our reserve list in case anyone drops out, please email me at the address below.

2015 local reared queens should be available mid to end May £30. Queen will be marked, but please ask if you would like the queen clipped.

Email: info@beehappyproducts.co.uk or call Tim Hutchinson 07954988136

**Overwintered colonies**

A number of fully established overwintered colonies with 2014 Queen on 22 National brood frames (2 brood boxes).

Available from March onwards (weather depending).

Price of each colony: £170 (frames only, excluding hive)

Contact: Astrid Bowers-Veenman (Yankari Bees)

Location: Ash Green (between Guildford and Farnham)

[Tel. No](http://Tel.No/).: 01252 330229

Mobile: 07803 069798

Email: astrid@coginternational.co.uk

david <david@eastsurreybees.co.uk>

**Colonies for sale**

I have a number of colonies for sale, due to over stock and as I have a building project starting soon. I am in Egham.

5 colonies with first year queens, currently in double National brood boxes - £180 each.  Brood boxes not included.

2 colonies with first year queens, currently in 7 frame National nucs - £120 each. Nuc boxes not included.

Good quiet bees, treated with Apivar for varroa control last autumn.

All will be available for collection from weekend of 14/15 March assuming weather continues to improve.

Please call Julian King on 01784 491828 or 07803 260028, Julian\_g\_king@Hotmail.com for more details.

**Honey buckets**

Some people may have seen a letter in February BeeCraft from a member (Vince) of the Reigate division regarding square food-grade tubs which Vince considered stronger and more space-efficient than round tubs. He wasn’t offering to supply these, but I made contact to see where they were from, and it seems he is prepared to get tubs for us. The tubs measure 25 x 25 x 26 cm, have a capacity of 10 litres (about 30 lb of honey) and can be stacked.  They cost £1.50 each, plus a £20 carriage charge for our order. If anyone needs honey tubs, and would consider going square, please let me know and I’ll place the order and go and collect them.

Paul Bunclark tallpaulclark@gmail.com

*Thank you, Paul, for researching and organising this. – Ed.*

**Thorne’s Premier foundation at 25% discount and an apology**

There has been a good response to this offer. It will continue until my wax runs out. The original ‘order by’ date was given so that any price increase in the new catalogue would be avoided, but I will be happy to place further orders based on current prices, if anyone is interested.

Due to a very thoughtless and flippant comment that I made during my talk at the last Winter Meeting, at least one of our members thought I wanted money in advance of your orders. I was horrified at my comment as soon as it was made and attempted to correct it immediately. I want you to be quite clear: I do not want, and never did want cash with order. My very sincere apologies to all concerned.

Geoff Cooper

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Wednesday  | March 11th | 7.30pm | David Rudland – Bee diseases | p. 1 and Feb p. 3 |
| Saturday | March 14th  | 9.30am-4.00pm | Surrey Bee Day | p. 1 and flyer |
| Wednesday  | March 25th | 7.30pm | Michael Main - Swarms | p. 1 |
| Saturday | April 11th | 10.00 am | Reigate Division, Auction, Mickleham | p. 3 and flyer |
| Saturday | April 11th | 10.30am - 4.30pm | Spring Meeting ofCentral Association of Bee-Keepers, Lambeth | p. 3 |
| Wedenesday  | April 22nd | 7.30 pm | Nosema Clinic | pp. 2-3 and attachment |
| Monday  | May 25th | All day | Surrey County Agricultural Show, Guildford | p. 3 |
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