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

***Editorial***

I would like to draw your attention to the lecture by Prof Keith Delaplane which is advertised on page 3. He is an internationally renowned honeybee research scientist, and it appears that he will deal with a topic which has come to the notice of many of us in recent years, and which I think is, to say the least, of great importance for the future of the honey bee.

The promising weather in February does not seem to have improved to give many consecutive good days as we thought it might, so our bees may not yet have exploded into life. However, the air seems to have a milder touch as the month has progressed and there are some reports of significant colony growth. With these somewhat variable temperatures, it is important to keep a close eye on our colonies and try not to be ‘caught out’. The occasional higher temperatures have encouraged some of our members to instigate shook swarm or Bailey comb change procedures. It will be interesting to hear how these colonies progress.

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**Reminders**

**Nosema Clinic**

Wednesday 22nd April, 7.30 - 9.30pm at St Peter’s Church Hall, 1 Burwood Road, Hersham KT12 4AA. Details in March newsletter pp 2 - 3. See article on p 4 on how to collect bee samples.

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­**Reports**

**Testing the wax melter donated to the Weybridge Division**

Four of our members (Geoff Cooper, Andrew Halstead, Sally Hutchinson and Tim Hutchinson) met to test the ‘SAF natura’ wax extractor which was very generously donated to our association by Gareth Morgan, a Wimbledon member. None of us was familiar with the device, although Tim had seen one before, so it was largely a “teach yourself learning experience” for all of us to find the way to use it. In the event, it was very simple, and we soon had the frames from the teaching apiary, as well as some wax from Michael Main, melted down into containers. It is obviously an excellent device for melting down the wax from old frames. The reservoir of water in the melter was heated using a portable gas ring. On another occasion we would probably start with hot water, if possible, and wrap the 21 inch diameter stainless steel container with insulating material to reduce the chilling effect of the cold wind and low ambient temperature, thus reducing the heating time. After the test, a few brief ideas were exchanged as to the best way the association could make use of the melter; the general feeling was it might be best to have a meeting with members bringing their wax-loaded frames as the device is at its most efficient when dealing with a large number of frames continuously being fed into the melter as soon as the current ones are finished. This would need careful management, as people would reasonably expect to take the same weight of melted wax home as the amount that they had fed into the melter: there would be a problem of how to match the input and the weights to take away. I am sure our resourceful committee will know what to do; they would probably also welcome your suggestions. While the water was heating in the melter, we retired to the kitchen for a nice lunch of soup and fruit supplied by Marion and prepared by Sally. This gave the melter time to heat up (about 1½ hours). We all stared at the melter waiting for clean melted wax to pour out into the waiting bread tins. It must have been after ten minutes, when we all thought it was not going to happen, that all of a sudden, the wax began to flow freely. Tim took some pictures which you can find on his blog and see what was achieved. Go to [www.beehappyproducts.com](http://www.beehappyproducts.com)

Tim Hutchinson and Geoff Cooper

**Report of Winter Meeting on Swarms, March 25th**

2014 was very much a swarming year for many of us and but for the sound advice and help from the senior members, (Michael and Geoff), we would definitely not have had the honey harvest that we enjoyed as we came to the end of the season. We had kept the supers coming and when it was clear that the bees were still intent on swarming we carried out artificial swarming and still, later in the year, they tried to swarm.

So with all of this in mind there was one out of the season’s meetings that we were determined to attend, and along with 40 other bee fans we made our way to St Peters Church Hall. Michael Main delivered a really good presentation, full of excellent information, advice and tips. The time just flew by. Thank you Michael for a really useful talk.

As with so many of these events, you can normally tell how engaged the audience is by the Q&A session, and boy, were we engaged, I think the Q&A lasted as long as the talk.What made it really good was the broad spread of experience in the room, we had new beekeepers about to embark on their first season rubbing shoulders with keepers who had years and years of experience. It was very enjoyable to listen to the beetalk going on all around us.

A very good evening, made even better by an outstanding lemon drizzle cake, if it’s not a classified secret, recipe please.

I would recommend these events to everyone, it’s great to share quality time with others who are equally committed to their gorgeous bees.

David Nield

*Thank you for this contribution, David, your first to our newsletter. May there be many more. – Ed.*

**Teaching Apiary Garden Tidy Up**

Thank you to all those who helped with the tidy up in the apiary on the 22nd March. A very successful and satisfying task - no more clutter around. The fire did eventually die down on Sunday! Thanks to the two Pauls, Dani, Joan, Anne, Anne, Annie, Richard, Peter, Lou, Edwina and to Marion for sustenance of bread and honey.

Thank you also to Gil who regularly strims the grass.

Sandra Rickwood

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**Future Events**

**First Garden Meeting of 2015,  Saturday 25th April at 2.30 pm**

This meeting will be held at Michael Main’s home: Hill House, Northfield Place, Weybridge KT13 0RF. Please send Michael an email (michaelfmain@hotmail.com) if you will be able to come.

At this meeting the theme will be ‘Planning for my 2015 Queen Rearing’

1) We will be looking at a couple of hives

2) Hopefully (if the bees respond to my requests) we will be preparing 4 Nucs for mating queens.

3) I hope we will also have a couple of other members present who will describe their plans for Queen Rearing as well so you should hear a range of methods.

4) This should help you decide how you will plan your queen rearing which we can discus over a picnic tea in the garden.

All members are encouraged to attend (especially the students on the current beginners’ course).  If you are planning to replace your queens this year this meeting is a MUST for you. Please bring food to share and a cup for a picnic in the garden following the hive activities.  Tea and coffee will be provided.

Michael Main

**Apiary meeting at Garsons Farm 24th May at 2.30 pm**

Peter Bowbrick has kindly offered to host another 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.

**An important lecture on bee management very soon**

Professor Keith Delaplane from the University of Georgia, USA will be presenting a lecture entitled *'Biological Clues for Good Bee Management'* at the **Leconfield Hall, Petworth GU28 0AH** **on Monday 13th April at 7:30pm.**

Unlike other agricultural animals, the modern honeybee occupies an ambiguous niche between 'domesticated animal' and 'wild animal'.  The history of agriculture has been one of increasing productivity of plants and animals far beyond levels required for their own reproduction.  Much of what we do in beekeeping is, in fact, solidly in this camp, including things like breeding bees for productivity, swarm management, colony equalizing, and migratory honey production.  But recent honeybee declines suggest that we may be pushing the limits of honeybee productivity.  Perhaps we need to pay renewed attention to the 'honeybee as wild animal' paradigm.  How can beekeepers partner with honeybee biology to improve bee health while maintaining reasonable levels of production?

Entry will be free to West Sussex BKA members with a £5 charge to non-members.

Graham, Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association, [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/)

**WSBKA Bee Market**

The West Sussex Beekeepers’ Association is again organising a Bee Market and Auction for the benefit of its members and non members with beekeepers attending to buy and sell from a very wide area. The event will take place at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough, West Sussex on Saturday 25th April 2015.  Auction details, Guidance Notes and the Entry Form are available to download from the WSBKA website - [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction).html.   If any Association would like hard copies of the Guidance Notes and/or Entry Form please let me know.  The Auction catalogue will be published online after 21st April.

For further details contact me on email [secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk)  or phone 01403 752493 Mobile 07761 349281

 Graham, Secretary West Sussex Beekeepers' Association

**National Honey Show, St George’s College, Weybridge, October 29th – 31st**

Please see attachment for the latest information.

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**Swarm List**

This year there will not be the number of swarms available from me as my name has been removed from the swarm lists at the police station and local authorities.  However I have agreed to hold a list of names of those members who would like swarms.  The members who are listed on the BBKA swarm lists will be asked to contact me to find homes for any swarms surplus to their requirements.  I will provide the names from this list in the order that they contact me.  Please send me an email if you wish to be included if you would like a swarm, even if you spoke to me at the A-Z of Swarms talk, as I did not make a note of any names and my memory is very bad.

 Michael Main – Swarm Coordinator

**Nosema - Collection of bee samples for checking**

It is preferable to collect older bees, as they are more likely to have nosema.

It is, therefore, ideal to collect foraging bees, not bees off the combs.

Equipment:

clear polythene bags about 10” x 6” (25 x 15 cm)

bag closures (wire twists or rubber bands)

sticky labels or a pen that will write on the bags (permanent ink)

Procedure:

1. label the bag(s) with your name, the date and the number or name of each hive
2. when the bees are actively flying in and out, close the hive entrance
3. leave closed for a minute or two (returning bees will accumulate around the entrance, but you won’t be in their way for long…)
4. with one hand, hold the open end of the bag hard up against the entrance
5. with the other hand, open the entrance a little
6. bees will fly out straight into the bag
7. when you estimate you have 30, collect a few more
8. quickly squeeze the open end of the bag to close it
9. withdraw from the hive entrance and secure the bag shut
10. place the bag in the freezer until required

*Jim and Enid Joyce, who have dealt with our nosema samples for several years, developed a very effective way of catching the bees at the entrance. They use an empty washing-up liquid or tomato ketchup bottle, and saw off the top and bottom, to make a flat-sided funnel. The narrow end of the sawn-off bottle is placed in the neck of the polythene bag (secured with a rubber band), and the wide end is placed over the hive entrance. If the bees are reluctant to emerge, gentle scraping of the bottle on the hive makes them appear. When enough have been collected, pull the funnel out of the bag and secure as above. It works really well!*

Marion Cooper, Weybridge Beekeepers, 2015

**Employment opportunity for a beekeeper**

I would like to bring to the attention of your members, the vacancy we currently have for a Seasonal Bee Inspector in the SE Region in the West Surrey/ East Kent/North (E)Sussex  area. This is a Seasonal part time role (approximately 3 days per week for the 6 summer months (April thru September). This is to replace the post held by David Rudland, whom many of you will know. David stood down at the end of last season in order to focus more time on his beekeeping business.

If any of your members would be interested, the job advertisement and application may be found here:

<https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi?SID=b3duZXI9NTA3MDAwMCZvd25lcnR5cGU9ZmFpciZqb2JsaXN0X3ZpZXdfdmFjPTE0NDg1MjEmcGFnZWFjdGlvbj12aWV3dmFjYnlqb2JsaXN0JnVzZXJzZWFyY2hjb250ZXh0PTE3MjU1NzYmcGFnZWNsYXNzPUpvYnMmcmVxc2lnPTE0Mjc3MjczNzEtODc0ZjI2M2IzZGNlZmMwYjA4ZWQ5NzMyOTk3MjM3ZTQ4N2UwNjVkNw>

Alternatively you may search for vacancy number 1448521 at: [www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/)

If anyone would like an informal chat about the role, then I would be happy to receive a telephone call or email.

Please note the closing date for applications is 17th April and all applications must be made via the Civil Service Jobs website.

**Julian Parker**  Regional Bee Inspector, South Eastern England.(contact details, p. 9)

*Note: The extraordinary website given above DOES work, but the shorter one on the next line doesn’t!*

**Wanted – please return**

Do you have any equipment that came from the teaching apiary?

Did you borrow anything, take home equipment or suits to clean or repair them for us?

If so, we would love to have them back in time for the current course. So please check what is lurking at the back of your sheds and contact one of us:

Sandra  [sandyrickwood@gmail.com](mailto:sandyrickwood@gmail.com) or Anne [wbks\_secretary@outlook.com](mailto:wbks_secretary@outlook.com).

Thank you.

Anne Miller

**An appeal against the importation of Italian Queens (to reduce the risk of SHB)**

Wally Thrale,  secretary for Bedfordshire BKA, has set up a petition for a ban on imports of queens from

Italy due to the presence of Small Hive Beetle (SHB).  Although bees will be inspected in Italy and given a Health Certificate there is the possibility of human error allowing a beetle to come into this country. He believes that if SHB reaches our shores it will be almost impossible to eradicate it, and we should do everything to we can to protect our bees in ways beekeepers on the continent cannot. If you would like to sign the petition please follow the link:

<http://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/ban-importation-of-honeybees-from-italy>

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

**More comments on Rob Chisholm’s article about Nosema in the January newsletter**

Referring back to my suggestion that the brood from a shook swarm exercise could be retained, Rob’s warning in the March Newsletter about not returning old (Nosema-infected) brood comb to the shook swarm by reuniting, should be noted carefully; I doubt if experienced beekeepers would do this but perhaps some new ones may fall into the trap. Only the hatched bees themselves would be combined with the shook swarm (obviously into a box of foundation over newspaper) after varroa treatment (MAQ strips are ideal at this time); the old comb, now empty, would be destroyed.

An alternative to this would be to do as I did last year and allow the brood to raise a queen and develop into a colony which, when strong enough, was given a Bailey comb change. It developed into a strong colony which produced 60 lb of honey; the shook swarm colony also flourished.

With regard to the suggestion that the shook swarm would be so depleted of bees that it would fail because some bees were left with the brood, I don’t think this would be the case as the ‘brood hive’ would be left near the original site and the flying bees would return to the shook swarm. The situation would be the same as in a natural swarm or an artificial swarm, with the queen and flying bees in one place and the brood with nurse bees in another; both should do well.

Geoff Cooper

**Some thoughts on comb change**

It seems to me that when considering a comb change we need to ask ourselves why we are doing it. If the combs are damaged or dirty, or there is a mild case of EFB, the answer if obvious, but if it is not for these reasons, I think we need first to check the level of varroa infestation and also have a test done for nosema. If varroa levels are not high for the time of year, and nosema tests indicate no nosema problem, and the combs are in good shape, should we give the bees more stress than necessary by asking them to produce more drawn comb, and taking their sealed brood away (then destroying it)? I suggest that we should first check for varroa and nosema, then select the appropriate method based on the results, ie Bailey if nosema level is low or undetected, shook swarm if it is high, or perhaps neither if the testing indicates infestation is not high enough to warrant a comb change. There are many variations that we can select, perhaps some better than the shook swarm which seems to have become a common spring practice in very recent years (a current fashion?). I think we need to know our bees, and the state and health of the colonies, then use our knowledge of basic hive management principles together with our ingenuity to combine these factors and hopefully produce the optimum results, rather than perform an annual routine.

One thing is for certain: “It ain’t nearly so easy to manage bees as it was 30 years ago!”

Geoff C.

**Michael Main’s email address correction**

Some people are still using Michael’s old email address. The correct one is now given in the contact details at the end of the newsletter.

**A street artist working on behalf of the bees**

There a street artist called Louis Masai Michel who is trying to bring public attention to the plight of bees. The pictures he's painted are beautiful. Please google his name and take a look.

*Thank you to Anne Hill, one of our current students, who brought this to our attention.- ­Ed.*

**Flower friendly farms ‘boost bee populations’**

Planting farmland with strips of flowers can boost the number of wild bumblebees, a study has confirmed.

Not only does it attract foraging bees, but it also encourages nesting, say researchers at the University of Sussex.

In past decades, many bumblebee species have declined, due to a number of factors, including intensive farming. The study, published in [**Molecular Ecology**](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291365-294X), suggest farms given funding to improve the environment can increase the size of wild bumblebee populations. The full report can be read on:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-32022546>

*Article contributed by David Parker*

**Now The Start of The Long Road**

**(The latest report of David’s course of treatment for anaphylaxis)**

In the November newsletter I called the piece I wrote, ‘Not the end but the beginning of the end’, as I was up to injection number 10. I have now completed the course of 12 weekly injections and am writing this as I sit in the Royal Surrey having had injection number 4 of the monthly injections – 32 more to go.

And that is the key thing - this course is much more of a marathon than a sprint in terms of commitment. As I am lucky and work for myself it is manageable, in that in effect it wipes out 2 hrs (including travel, waiting etc.) on a Thursday every four weeks.

You meet people excited as they are coming to the end of their 3 years of injections, and you certainly get to know all the staff well. This week for the first time I literally had no reaction to the injection – okay anti-histamine tablet is taken before and I put cream on after the injection – but you literally could not see where I have been in effect stung; the injection is equal to roughly two bee stings.

Of course the other thing to remember is that it still ‘Officially’ only protects you for two stings, the need to practice ‘safe beekeeping’ is still very important. No gaps where zips do up in the suit to let a few bees in, and the Epipen will need to be carried in the bee suit at all times – just in case. I am though looking forward to a new season and building up again to enjoy bee keeping.

David Parker

[**Bees prefer road-side snacks**](http://wildlifenews.co.uk/2015/03/bees-prefer-road-side-snacks/)

A new study from Plymouth University seems to show that bumble bees would rather dodge the traffic when foraging on hedges than pop over the other side for a peaceful snack in a field… more of this on

<http://wildlifenews.co.uk/2015/03/bees-prefer-road-side-snacks/>

*Thanks to Graham Maguire for this contribution*

**Now cleared for landing at airports: Bees**

An article, dated Feb 19, 2015 (from the New York Times, Science website), reports on the increasing siting of bee hives on airport green space. This has occurred at more than a dozen airports in various countries including Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the USA. The airports obtain carbon credits for permitting the installation of bee colonies, beekeepers need more space which the airports have, and there are no industrial pesticides to damage the bees. The full report can be read by typing the title of this article into Google.

*Thanks to Graham Maguire for drawing our attention to this article; there must be possibilities here.*

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**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 all equipment is sterilised before use. Inexperienced purchasers should take a knowledgeable beekeeper with them.

**Bees for sale**

Buckfast bees for sale

Overwintered nucs £140, full colonies £180

Phone Jim Joyce on 01932 225435

**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](mailto:info@beehappyproducts.co.uk) or call Tim Hutchinson 07954 988136

**Colonies for sale**

Overwintered colonies

A number of fully established overwintered colonies with 2014 Queen in double brood box (22 National brood frames). Available from end March/April (weather depending). The colonies were treated for Varroa late summer/autumn 2014. All queens are locally reared. Price of each colony: £160 (excluding hive).

Nucs available to pre-order now:

6 Frame Nucs (National frames) with 2015 mated queen (reared locally). Supplied in 6 frame Poly Nuc.

£140 + £20 nuc deposit which is refundable on return

5 Frame Nucs (National frames) with 2015 mated queen (reared locally). Supplied in 5 frame Correx Travelling Box. Price: £145

The nuc frames will have a mated 2015 Queen with a combination of her brood in various stages and stores. These nucs will be available from late May/June onwards depending on weather.

Contact: Astrid Bowers-Veenman (Yankari Bees)

Location: Ash Green (between Guildford and Farnham, just off the A31)

Distance from Weybridge: 12 miles (as the crow flies)

[Tel.No](http://Tel.No/).: 01252 330229 Mobile: 07803 069798 Email: [astrid@coginternational.co.uk](mailto:astrid@coginternational.co.uk)

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

**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](mailto:Julian_g_king@Hotmail.com) for more details.

**Thorne’s Premier foundation at 25% discount (see February newsletter, p. 6)**

I am continuing to obtain and supply Premier grade foundation until my store of wax runs out. Please let me have your order as soon as you can so that my journeys to Windsor are more worthwhile. My next visit will be on April 7th, so please let me know by April 6th at the latest. The sale price will continue to be 25% off the Thorne’s current catalogue price, which incidentally, is the same as in 2014.

Thank you, Geoff C.

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | | |
| Saturday | April 11th | 10.00 am | | Reigate Division, Auction, Mickleham | March p. 3 and flyer |
| Saturday | April 11th | 10.30am - 4.30pm | | Spring Meeting of  Central Association of  Bee-Keepers, Lambeth | March p. 3 |
| Monday | April 13th | 7.30 pm | | Prof Keith /Delaplane  Petworth | p. 3 |
| Wedenesday | April 22nd | 7.30 pm | | Nosema Clinic | pp. 1 and 4 |
| Saturday | April 25th | 2.30 pm | | Garden Meeting – Michael Main | p. 2 |
| Saturday | April 25th |  | | WSBKA Bee Market and Auction, Pulborough | p. 3 |
| Sunday | May 24th | 2.30 pm | | Apiary Meeting, Garson Farm – Peter Bowbrick | p. 3 |
| Monday | May 25th | All day | | Surrey County Agricultural Show, Guildford | March p. 3 |
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| Teaching Apiary Manager  Sandra Rickwood - 01932 244326  email: sandrarickwood@btinternet.com | | | Nosema Clinic  Jim and Enid Joyce - 01932 225435  email: enid.w.joyce@gmail.com | | |
| Regional Bee Inspector  Julian Parker 07775 119469 | | | Swarms  Michael Main – 01932 849080 michaelfmain@hotmail.com | | |
| LOCAL BEE ADVISORS | | | | | |
| Rob Chisholm - 01483 715779 | | | Geoff Cooper - 01932 242179 | | |
| Jim Joyce - 01932 22543 | | | A VACANCY | | |