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

***Editorial***

I sometimes despair at the mess our world is in on so many environmental fronts which is (I think) to a great extent the result of greed and not so much due to ignorance. My feelings extend to the honeybee situation. I have recently tried to be more optimistic by coming to the conclusion that while I can’t do much of significance about nuclear waste disposal, oil pollution, the possibility of spillage in the Arctic Ocean, the devastation of Antarctica in future decades, the current destruction of rain forests, fishing stocks and other wildlife, the mismanagement of our finite resources, and the greed that is the root of so much of this… at least I can have a miniscule positive effect on our local part of the planet by helping our honey bees by trying to become aware of their predicament and managing them so that at least my own have a better chance of thriving, despite everthing.

Do give my love to your own bees!

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**REMINDERS**

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

Peter Bowbrick has kindly offered to host this meeting at his apiary on 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, coffee and milk will be provided, but please bring a mug; a flask of hot water would be useful as well, if possible.

To reach the apiary, drive to the diagonally opposite corner of the car park from where you enter, keeping the buildings to your right. Look for the beekeeper to direct you on!

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

Sue Lawes

**Surrey County Agricultural Show, Monday 25th May**

Attached is the Schedule for the Honey section. All of our members are strongly encouraged to enter their honey and other items in the various classes. It is easy to win a cup for your division as the cup for cut comb only requires two matching samples of honeycomb and the even grander Novice's award is given for one jar of honey, set or liquid. It is a great day, and time that some division other than Farnham or Guildford should win the divisional cup. Late entries accepted up to 12th May.

Hazel Sharples, Showbench sec. hazel.sh90@gmail.com

**Surrey BKA Training Day – General Husbandry practical assessment, Wednesday, 3rd June, 10 am**

See p. 3 and flyer.

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­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­**REPORTS**

**Nosema Clinic, Wednesday 22nd April**

Following this clinic, David Parker sent us a note regarding the impact of Nosema on honey bees, together with some of his thoughts regarding our clinic, and Anne Miller has contributed a positive note on the evening. Please read both reports to gain the full picture!

**Nosema Affects Honey Production and Brood**

*A study in 2013 in Spain concluded:  “Despite the remarkable impact of Nosema infection on beekeeping economics,  this effect is often underestimated by beekeepers. However, in our experimental conditions*

*N. ceranae infection was highly pathogenic to honey bee colonies, as witnessed by sub-clinical signs such as* ***significant decreases in colony size, brood rearing capacity, honey production*** *and, as reported previously, a decrease in the rate of survival. The study revealed that the* ***control of Nosema in autumn and spring*** *could be enough to mitigate these negative effects.”*

*(full findings here:* [*http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3640932/*](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3640932/)*)*

Given this clear scientific finding it was perhaps surprising to me as a new beekeeper that so few Weybridge members attended the Nosema clinic.  As Rob Chisholm in a previous newsletter  and winter meeting had highlighted, when high Nosema counts are found then shook swarming can prove very effective at combatting it.  It is a bit like saying I have no Varroa as I do not count them, so I have no problem.  Varroa and Nosema are both issues that need to be dealt with as part of on-going bee management so surely it makes sense to understand how little or badly infected your colonies are.

Another study in the US came to slightly different conclusions but stated:

*“So perhaps colonies can still be productive despite having up to 20% of their bees infected by Nosema ceranae, so long as they remain strong.  But that may be the exception– keep in mind that 16 of the 20 productive colonies had less than that rate of infection, and only 1 had more than 20% infected.  On the other hand, in the non-productive hives, 13 of 21 had at least 10% of the bees infected.  So these data suggest that the “tip point” at which nosema noticeably affects honey production occurs when* ***more than about 10-20% of the bees are infected.****”  (full findings here:* [*http://scientificbeekeeping.com/nosema-ceranae-and-honey-production-in-healthy-colonies/*](http://scientificbeekeeping.com/nosema-ceranae-and-honey-production-in-healthy-colonies/)*)*

Our thanks, though, go out from those that did attend to the organisers of the clinic, as it is a lot of work pulling everything together, and the microscope linked in to a computer made viewing so easy.

David Parker

Last month’s nosema clinic gave us an excellent opportunity to use the division’s new microscope and camera. Attached to a PC it gave us terrific views of various nosema samples.  Some of the samples from hives that had had recent comb changes were light, but one sample from a hive with old comb was off the scale with nosema spores and the screen was packed with the regular shaped ovals. It was an excellent opportunity to take stock of the health of our hives and to discuss all things related to bee health.

Thanks to Martin for working the camera, Rob, Marion and Geoff for manning the microscopes and Chris for the best carrot cake ever.

Anne Miller

**First Garden Meeting of 2015, Saturday 25th April, at Michael Main’s house**

It was an overcast morning but brightened up in time for our visit to Michael Main’s lovely garden for hive inspections and presentations on queen rearing.

We had a good turnout, 34 of us made it to the event which was very encouraging. The more members that attend, the greater the opportunity to share experiences and until we donned the veils there was a lot a chatter and swapping of tips. I remember when we started keeping bees it was invaluable to get advice from seasoned keepers and that remains the case.

*Apologies for this line – it has resisted all my attempts to delete it. Suggestions welcome. –Ed.*

Owing to the numbers, we split into 2 groups, Rob took one and Michael the other. It’s very different carrying out inspections in a group as it engenders much banter and sharing. The queen hunt in the bigger of the 2 hives that we checked lasted until the very last frame of the last brood box. It may be just as important to check the brood patterns and all the other indicators, however it is always a thrill and a relief to see her.

After the inspections it was drinks and snacks whilst the presentations started, (no lemon drizzle cake, not happy).

The first to present, with an intriguing use of spent ammo, was David Parker, using empty cartridges to remove the right cell from the frame for your potential new queen (the so-called Cell Punch method). This was fascinating and for someone with sausage fingers like me, a more delicate method of preparing a cell for the bees to rear a queen.

The second presentation was given by Tim Hutchinson. He demonstrated the use of a Cloake board for queen rearing and also introduced a more conventional approach, used extensively by bee farmers like himself; this involved ‘grafting’ very young larvae and was equally fascinating for those of us who have not reared queens like this. We had issues with failing queens last year and these methods will be valuable back ups.

Geoff showed the equipment and gave a brief description of a fourth queen rearing method (the Cup Kit Method) which gave us all another option to consider, so we had plenty of choice to suit our preferences.

I apologise for not going into greater detail for each of these methods but I could write pages on what we learnt and also, I think you had to be there to get the full picture. So do please come to the next one, they are really worthwhile.

Thank you very much to Michael, David, Tim and Geoff for your time and contagious passion for bees, as always you got your message across in a warm and friendly way.

David Nield

*Thank you, David, for writing this report. Below are two items from Michael Main relating to the meeting.* Please note that this garden meeting was sponsored by BDI who have given the division £100.  This grant was part of BDI healthy bee events.  It covered both the Nosema meeting and my Garden meeting.  As a result, the ambition of this garden meeting was not the norm and I do not want other members put off hosting garden meetings because they have a smaller garden/operation.  It can be a great help to our newer members to see how others operate on a smaller basis with just one or two hives.

Two mugs and two knives were left behind after the meeting. Please contact Michael if they are yours.

01932 849080 or michaelfmain@hotmail.com

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Surrey BKA Training Day – General Husbandry practical assessment, Wednesday, 3rd June, 10 am**

A flyer is attached giving details of this event, which is intended as training for anyone who is interested in taking this BBKA assessment. Passing the ‘General Husbandry’ is a well recognised milestone for a beekeeper who already has a good theoretical and practical knowledge of beekeeping.

**East Surrey Bees. Queen Rearing Day, Sunday 24th May** A practical day on a variety of methods of small scale queen rearing. Lunch provided.   More details on our website.

For booking form and further details please contact us on enquire@eastsurreybees.co.uk

On a personal note, thank you to all those who have given us moral and practical support over the last 13 months, but I am really glad to say that we are back in our home after the flood, still haven't unpacked fully but at least we are home at last!

Celia and David Rudland, East Surrey Bees, [www.eastsurreybees.co.uk](http://www.eastsurreybees.co.uk/) 0208 6607753

**Courses for “Improver Beekeepers”:**

These are courses run by Kent BKA on *Practical Bee Handling, Pollen identification under the Microscope* and *Practical Queen Rearing,* over the period 25th May to 25th July. The times on each day are from 10am-4pm and the cost of each course is either £20 or £25 (depending on the course). The courses will be run by Bob Smith, Patrick Murfet, David Rudland and Terry Clare.

See website for full details: [www.ksrcbees.org.uk](http://www.ksrcbees.org.uk/), and follow the links to the bookings page.

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**New Teaching Apiary - Gardening - Thank you!**

To all those who responded to Anne's call for volunteers to help prepare the site in Weybridge, a huge thank you. An amazing amount of work was done in just two hours by Martin, Jo, Annie, Martin, Jonah, Fiona, Peter, Roy, Andrew, Geoff, Jeff, Marion, Paul, Michael, Jane, Chris and Anne. Subsequent work was done by Annie and Anne as well. More news on this apiary to follow later.

Thank you also to Gil for strimming in the Teaching apiary at Burhill School before the practical sessions started on the 25th April. All looking good!

Sandra Rickwood

**Waitrose – Charity donation to Weybridge Beekeepers**

Our thanks go to Martin Major, who arranged with the Weybridge Branch of Waitrose for them to include us as one of the charities to which they make a monthly donation. We are expecting a cheque for £327. In 2010 we received £270 when Sandra Rickwood approached the Hersham branch, so this is well worth doing. If any member would be prepared to make a similar request to other Waitrose branches in the area, eg Cobham, West Byfleet and any others, please contact Martin Major before going to the store so that he can make sure that only one person contacts each branch!

**International pollen experiment**

<http://www.nature.com/news/bee-studies-stir-up-pesticide-debate-1.17366?WT.ec_id=NATURE-20150423>

Through IBRA (International Bee Research Association, based in Cardiff), I’m doing a pollen count experiment along with many other beekeepers across Europe, I missed the first trial date as the pollen traps didn’t arrive in time, but now have them in place. I could put something together for the newsletter as the experiment progresses.

Peter Webb

*Thank you, Peter. Yes please to your offer! We are also doing this pollen diversity study. Are any other members involved as well? Do let me know. –Ed.*

**A request to work with a beekeeper**

My name is Simone Raspo, 31 years old male Italian beekeeper and freelance bee-reporter.

I had already an agreement to work the 2015 season in London with Mr. Curtis at Local Honey Man LTD and I was ready to move in the next few days but in the end he changed his mind. At the moment I'm looking for a new opportunity in UK to further improve my knowledge and skills in the field. Recommended by the BBKA I have found your contact on internet and I was wondering if you were interested in any sort of collaboration.

I'm in the beekeeping field since 2008. I have worked for four seasons in Italy running own bees and with an organic beekeeper learning all aspects of organic beekeeping methods. Experience increased working the 2013 season in Tasmania, Australia and the 2014 season in New Zealand as queen rearing beekeeper in the large scale company. I have photo-reported, volunteered and worked as apiary technician giving professional counselling to NGOs and association on developing projects in Karnataka, India (2010), Senegal (2012), Nepal (2014) and Gujarat, India (2015).

Please find the attached CV for further information.

Thanking you for your attention and remaining at your disposal for any clarification, I extend cordial greetings.

Simone Raspo *Simone Raspo -**simoneraspo@gmail.com* *beekeeper and freelance bee-reporter*

**Some guides for Honey prices…**

*Thank you to Bernard Newnham for the first entry, below, about the Duchess of Cornwall’s honey (£20 for 227g), and to David Parker for the second entry (next page), on the Middle East.*

Please refer to this:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/food/article-3036307/Is-Camilla-s-homemade-honey-worth-sting-20-price-tag.html>

**Should we export all of our honey to the Middle East?**

I have converted the prices of Yemeni Honeys shown on the website below, and they are roughly:

Sidr                   £94 lb

Do'ani               £46 lb

Socotra             £46 lb

Sumar               £42 lb

Sidr Usaimi      £46 lb

Wildflower       £40 lb

<http://www.balqees.com/shop/yemeni/>

**Articles of interest**

Here are links to two BBC online articles contributed by David Parker. The first is about an attempted computer simulation of a bee brain for use in a drone (the mechanical sort) and the second is about studying bee behaviour within the hive, using electronic equipment.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-32216463

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-32159463

**Hopefully this will make someone laugh!**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The swarm of bees with a marked Queen that landed in my garden late last year is shaping up very nicely.

It's true by the way, saw her today.

Marion Malcher

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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 or call Tim Hutchinson 07954 988136

**Colonies for sale**

**A number of fully established overwintered colonies with 2014 Queen in double brood box (22 National brood frames).**

The colonies were treated for Varroa late summer/autumn 2014. All queens are locally reared.

Price of each colony: £160 (excluding hive)

**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**

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions

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

I am sorry to say that I cannot supply any more as my store of wax is almost exhausted. I hope to renew this offer in the future when the supply has built up again. Thank you for your custom.

Geoff Cooper

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Sunday | May 24th | 2.30 pm | Apiary Meeting, Garsons Farm – Peter Bowbrick | p. 1 |
| Sunday  | May 24th | All Day | Queen Rearing East Surrey Bees | p. 3 |
| various | 25th May to25th July | 10 am – 4.00 pm | Practical bee handlingPollen identificationQueen rearing | p. 3 and flyer |
| Monday  | May 25th | All day | Surrey County Agricultural Show, Guildford | p. 1 and flyer |
| Wednesday | June 3rd | Half day from 10.00 am | General Husbandry Practical Assessment Training Day | p. 3 and flyer |
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| Regional Bee InspectorJulian Parker 07775 119469 | SwarmsMichael Main – 01932 849080 michaelfmain@hotmail.com |
| LOCAL BEE ADVISORS |
| Rob Chisholm - 01483 715779 | Geoff Cooper - 01932 242179 |
| Jim Joyce - 01932 22543 | A VACANCY  |