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

***Editorial***

How often do we hear the comment from various people (including beekeepers), “I love bees but I hate wasps”. My general response is along the lines that I feel rather sorry for wasps; they are only doing their job in providing for their families as do honey bees, but unlike bees who are vegetarians, wasps are omnivorous (for which they are not to blame), hence are an aggravation to us at our picnics, etc. It does not seem to be generally known that wasps are predators of a vast range of pests (caterpillars, etc), and thus are the friends of gardeners. There is a very informative article, including this aspect of wasps in the BBKA e newsletter *Worker Bee.* I have quoted part of this on page 5.Beekeepers will say what a problem wasps are to our bees (this can occur in the autumn when their supply of spring food is no longer available). At that time I use the basic standard method to help the bees to guard their hive by reducing the width of the hive entrances before the problem starts. I have never found wasps to be a problem for the bees. Reducing entrances should be a standard practice by beekeepers, anyway, at the end of summer when the honey flow stops; robbers in the form of bees from other hives as well as wasps will be looking to augment their food supplies from other people’s (!) hives. Here is another observation I heard recently, comparing bees and wasps, seriously delivered by a boy about five years old: “When a bee stings you, it dies; when a wasp stings you, you die!”

It looks as if the fear of the bees catching us out with a deluge of activity and honey mentioned as a possibility in the last newsletter was not in their minds at all. I did hear some of them muttering that the humans had switched the rain off for June and July so, they said, “How can we fill up the supers if the nectar has dried up?” At last they are sealing the spring honey, so there seems to be a fairly good harvest for the year. New beekeepers need to be thinking about preparations for winter (it has been said that the bees’ winter starts on July 31st). These winter preparation jobs include checking that the colonies have active queens, combining colonies, assessment of varroa levels and control treatment, assessment of stores for winter and feeding if necessary (by the end of September at the latest; a full sized colony needs 40 lb of stores of which at least half should be honey).

**REMINDERS**

August and September Garden / Apiary Meetings – see pages 2-3 for details.

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**Crockford Bridge Farm Apiary Meeting, Saturday 18th July**

Thanks to Jonathan Hall for hosting this meeting, attended by 11 adults and 2 young, enthusiastic beekeepers. The apiary is Jonathan’s Nuc Apiary which he uses to house his new queens raised from queen cells in another of his apiaries and mated in yet another. This apiary consists of 2 dozen nucs of differing types – National, Commercial, single and double boxes, which can be increased to full colonies and used for pollination contracts. The feral colony in a nearby tree seems to have co-existed happily with these apiary bees for the last couple of seasons.

The theme of this meeting was Queens. Jonathan had prepared 5 queenless nucs and invited us to work out which they were by looking at the behaviour of the bees at the entrances (much more activity outside the queenless ones). Following that, he found the queens in the 4 nucs that we inspected, demonstrating how to pick them up carefully by the thorax to put into a marking cage. With the help of the 2 boys, the queens were marked blue. The next exercise was to re-queen a queenless nucs. Ideally, this should contain 2 or 3 frames of sealed larvae/pupae (no eggs or unsealed larvae). Jonathan had a store of queens, grafted about 5 weeks previously, in queen cages with attendants and fondant. One of these was placed on the top of the frames where it was soon surrounded (not balled) by inquisitive bees. The cage was suspended between 2 frames and would be left for 1 or 2 days just to make sure that the workers were happy with the queen, after which the plastic seal covering the exit of the queen cage would be broken off allowing her to be slowly released from the cage into the hive by the bees eating the fondant blocking the exit.

Other points of interest were how Jonathan removed a nuc with laying workers and replaced with a queenright colony; how he rescued a clipped queen from a cluster on the ground and re-housed by placing her in a nuc next to the cluster. The final surprise was the full depth comb that had been built by the workers accompanying a clipped queen who made her way back to the hive, but only made it to the underside of the mesh floor. As the hive was mounted on a stand about two feet high the bees had been able to draw full depth comb, so Jonathan was able to place the floor on top of a deep brood box (combs hanging) enabling the colony to continue its work having had very little interference. A photograph of this has been included as an attachment to the newsletter.

As always, Jonathan continues to experiment with different equipment and methods to optimise his beekeeping.

The meeting was concluded with a picnic on the grass with an attractive array of food provided by the members.

Joan Baron

*Thank you, Joan for this detailed and concise report, your first contribution to the newsletter. We look forward to reading your future reports and/or other contributions. – Ed.*

**Search for a permanent site for Weybridge division**

In an earlier newsletter a request for help was made to our members in finding a permanent site.  Thank  you to all who responded for your input.  There was a committee meeting on Wednesday 29 July where the matter was discussed and we are currently following up with one of the options identified.  I hope to be able to provide you with more information on this in the near future.

On a related matter the committee was invited to attend the opening of the Reigate division's new facility for a topping out ceremony and BBQ. Those of us who attended were very impressed at what Reigate have achieved. They have a purpose built clubhouse with meeting facilities, kitchen/extractor room and ample storage and parking space. Adjacent to the building is a secluded area where hives are now established. Some pictures are available on the newly revamped Surrey BKA website ([www.surreybeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.surreybeekeepers.org.uk/)) - please take the time to have a look at the pictures in the News section.

Martin Major

*Do look at all of the new Surrey website – Martin has done great job on this as well as on our own Weybridge Division site.*

**BBKA Basic Assessment**

Another 6 of our members have passed this assessment.

Our congratulations to Paul, Kate and Aidan Cownley, Richard Hignett, Sam Lacey and David Parker; the last five in the list passed with Credit. We also record our thanks to Tim and Sally Hutchinson who ran their usual study group in preparation for this assessment. The certificates will be presented at our AGM later in the year.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Garden / Apiary meetings**

*1. August meeting*

**Please note that the date for this meeting has had to be changed. Read on…**

**Teaching Apiary Meeting, Saturday 8th August at 2.30pm**

The August meeting will be held in the Teaching Apiary at Burhill Primary School. For those who do not know where the apiary is located it is in New Berry Lane, Hersham, next to the Waitrose car park. KT12 4HL. Parking is free for the first two hours and £1.50 for the next two hours. There is also a small council car park in New Berry Lane.

Enter the school grounds via the Childrens Centre gate, turn left and head towards a second gate. From there you will see the apiary in the diagonally opposite corner of the school grounds.

If you are planning on attending please let me know either by telephone 01932 244326 or email sandyrickwood@gmail.com. Please bring your own cup/mug and a flask of boiling water - if you have one. Tea, coffee, milk and sugar will be provided.

I look forward to seeing many of you there, Sandra

 *Please note that this will be a historic occasion - the last meeting at this apiary site as we are moving later this month - do come if you can!*

*2. September meeting*

David Parker is offering to host a ‘Winter Garden Meeting’ on Saturday 5th September starting at 1pm (slightly early so that hopefully it will still be warm when we finish).  The theme will be  ‘Make it and Clean it Yourself’.

It is subject to the weather being good enough and thus would be confirmed on the Wednesday prior to the 5th when the weather forecast confirms things.  Parking is on the road and free, but **please** **let David know if you will be coming so he has an idea of numbers**:  davidparker@polymathconsulting.com.

*David has asked that we let him know as soon as we can as he intends to invite Guildford members if there are spaces.* Please put in the subject of your email:  GARDEN MEETING.  Contributions as usual for tea gratefully appreciated.  Address is 11 Horsell Park Close, Woking, GU21 4LZ*.*

**Clean It**

The idea is that we will have the Weybridge large wax melter going for anyone to use for frames.

If someone can lend a Burco boiler as well the idea would be to have one of these going so people could get frames wax melted and then cleaned in one go.   In addition those who have never cleaned frames could be shown how it is done by the experts.

**Make It**

Many people to do not realise how easy it is to make some of the simple things needed for hives including the following.  If you bring the wood we can cut to size on the day:

·       Entrance blocks

·       Crown boards – typically using 8mm Ply but can be using 12mm Ply, we can drill feeder holes etc.

·       Snelgrove Boards – I use 18mm ply, they are heavy but it allows for plenty of thickness for the screws.

·       Dummy Boards – I use bee space wood along the top and 18mm Ply or OSB

·       Ekes – easy to make up in variety of heights from either ply, obf or untreated timber – I have even use pallets and using the bench saw we can ensure even edges.

If people bring the wood I have all the tools and am happy to show and help people make these things.  I am also happy to pick up with pre-orders from Champions:

1.     Bee space wood that is 8mm x 21mm and is ideal for use on crown boards is 30p per 300mm, so you need to order 300/600/900/1200 lengths, sorry.

2.     Other wood that is 21mm x 15mm ideal to use on snelgrove boards where you want a high margin in case of queen cells hanging down, entrance blocks, etc., again same lengths 38p per 300mm.

Payment on the day is fine but please confirm quantity by 31st August so I can pick up in time.

**Show It**

If people can bring things they have made that would also be great so that other people can get inspiration from what others have made.

David Parker

**Surrey BKA Training Day, Saturday September 19th, East Horsley**

The attached flyer gives full details of this event at which there will be two presentations:

The Sussex Plan for Honey Bee Health & Well Being – Professor F. Ratnieks, Sussex University

Bees in the City: the effects of urbanisation on honeybees – Elizabeth Samuelson, University of London

**National Honey Show, October 29th – 31st**

Attached is the latest Honey Show newsletter dated July 2015; there is a lot of information in this.

**Reminder for November 2015 Modules**

The November modules will be held on 14 November this year. If you are intending to sit one or more please:-

* Download a copy of the latest application form from the BBKA website, fill it in and have it countersigned by someone from your division
* Make sure that your application form is with me by 23 September. The fee per module is £25, this can be paid by cheque, but preferably by ringing BBKA at Stoneleigh (02476 696679), paying by credit or debit card and then writing the receipt number you are given on the application form before sending it to me.
* Send the form to me and not direct to Stoneleigh; I have to make sure we have enough desks and chairs available on the day for all candidates and if I don’t know you are hoping to take a module because you have sent your form direct to BBKA, I can’t take you into account when planning the day.
* Email me at beeexams@hotmail.co.uk if you have any queries.

Celia Perry, Surrey Exam Secretary

**A chance to learn how to make hand dipped beeswax candles.**

 This technique produces beautiful tapered candles that smell of beeswax.  The event is organised by Croydon Beekeepers but open to non members. Please email to reserve a place or ask any questions.Good Food Matters, Mickleham Way, New Addington CR0 0PN, 12th August 2015 7-9 pm Fee £10.

Mark Stott, 37 Penshurst Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 7EE, Tel: 0208 684 1098 M; 0792 1234 916.

Croydonbeekeepers@gmail.com

**Request for help with research project**

My name is Ronke Abdulmalik, I am a MSc Veterinary Microbiology student at the University of Surrey who is doing my dissertation on the potential antimicrobial properties of honeybee products.

I wanted to ask whether you would be willing to allow me to buy and/or take samples of honeybee products from your apiary such as  honey, pollen and royal jelly? These samples will be processed at the lab and their potential antimicrobial activity will be determined. Full credit will be given in my project write up to the sources of these products and the results will be provided to you if you wish to have them.

For further details on the project, please find the participant information sheet attached.

Thanking you in advance,

Miss Ronke Abdulmalik

*If you are able to help, please respond directly to Ronke by email:*

ia00174@surrey.ac.uk

***Nature* supplement on bees**

Our thanks go to one of our members, Marion Malcher, who has supplied details of how to access this supplement that was mentioned in last month’s newsletter:

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v521/n7552_supp/index.html>

**What would you like to read in *BeeCraft?***

BeeCraft's annual editorial meeting will be taking place in September.  This is when we discuss and plan what articles to include in the magazine the following year.  This time we have decided to ask for your input.

We would be pleased to receive suggestions from you on what you would like us to cover, with contact details of potential authors, enabling us to tap in to the wealth of knowledge that exists within county and country. I would be pleased to receive ideas direct to my email wendy@bee-craft.com so I can take them to the editorial team for inclusion in our discussions.

Wendy and the *Bee Craft* team

***Worker Bee –* e newsletter from the BBKA**

The July issue of this newsletter will be sent to you in a separate email. The heading gives an idea of the content of these newsletters, to which we are invited to subscribe:

“BBKAmember e-newsletter covering the latest news, initiatives, opportunities, outcomes and policies.”

**Wasps - Friend or Foe?**

Many beekeepers as well as local authorities are unaware that social wasp species are a vital part of our ecosystem - particularly prior to August - while some solitary species are bred and used for controlling pest insects in agriculture.

Prior to August, wasps, being omnivorous, feed on a vast range of pest species; fly larvae, caterpillars, carrion and, by contrast, nectar. It is only in August that, with less of such prey, they switch to fruit and becoming intoxicated they sting on impact.  It is at this time that they become a problem to beekeepers.

Clive S.M. Cohen Barnet BKA

*Quoted from the BBKA e newsletter “Worker Bee” July 2015 (see also previous entry and editorial)*

**More research on neonicotinoids (Harvard University)**

“The results from this study not only replicate findings from the previous study, but also reinforce the conclusion that sublethal exposure to neonicotinoids is likely the main culprit for the occurrence of CCD.” For full report see <http://csglobe.com/harvard-study-proves-why-the-bees-are-all-disappearing/>

**Raw honey contains probiotic that boosts immunity**

<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/raw-honey-contains-probiotic-boosts-immunity>

*Thanks to David Parker for bringing these last two items to our attention.*

**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.

**Beekeeping equipment available – any reasonable offer will be accepted**

One of our members, John Rife, has lost the two sites where he and Annie used to keep their bees and he has heavy work commitments, so they are having to give up beekeeping for the time.

He has the following for sale:

All hive parts are National

2 queen excluders

Package of Sulphur strips

Feeders -2

Supers -7

Brood box -2

Varroa floor -1

Copper smoker -1

Entrance reducers -3

Hive floor -1

Hive Covers -2

Inner Covers -2

Brood box Spacers -2

Super Spacers -3

Hive Tools -3

Assorted number of frames need cleaning

Unassembled frames

Please contact John at jwrife@googlemail.com

**Bees for Sale**

Following a very successful breeding season we have various full and part colonies that are surplus and available for sale.  Prices from £100 upwards for colonies depending on your requirements. We can also supply mated queens, frames of bees up to complete hives.

If you are interested, please contact:

Astrid Bowers-Veenman

Location : Ash Green, GU12 6HP

Email      : astrid@coginternational.co.uk

Mobile    : 07803 069798

Tel.        : 01252 330229

**STOP PRESS**

**Chronic bee paralysis virus – are your bees affected?**

Some of our members – including us - have been noticing an abnormally high number of dead bees on the ground outside one or more hives this summer. A characteristic of the affected bees is that many of them are hairless and so appear shiny black or greasy, while others that are not quite dead are moving very slowly and trembling slightly. We noticed heaps of several hundred bees outside just one of our colonies (a very strong colony) during the very hot weather a few weeks ago, and initially assumed it may have been something to do with the heat and inadequate ventilation, so we gave them extra ventilation and space (an empty super) and the problem appeared to be solved - no more dead bees after just a few days, but the appearance of the dead bees continued to make us wonder if that was the whole answer.

Since then we have heard of colonies actually dying out, so I rang Julian Parker (Regional Bee Inspector) and he told me that the problem is fairly common this year and that the National Bee Unit consider that it is caused by chronic bee paralysis virus; there are photographs on BeeBase and a video will be added soon, so do check that site.

One of our members, Chris Burnett, had already contacted Julian, and was thoughtful enough to consider not attending any bee meetings as his bees are affected, but transmission is only from bee to bee as viruses do not survive except within a living host, so equipment or clothing cannot be sources of infection.

Listed below, not in any special order, are some facts that Julian passed on to me, with some others added following a call from our local seasonal bee inspector, Jonathan Whitehouse, who I had contacted as Julian was not initially vailable.

Infection with this virus is usually rare

There are numerous cases this year

Congestion within the hive seems to be a contributory factor

Sudden variations and extremes in weather conditions may also contribute

Colonies may recover or decline and die out

There is currently no evidence of recurrence

There is nothing that a beekeeper has done wrong that will initiate an outbreak of this viral infection

Poisoning may be suspected, but this results in one large loss of bees, not the daily loss that the virus causes

Colonies may lose most of their foragers and require feeding

Nothing can be done except this feeding, if required, and the provision of more space

There is no risk of transmission by beekeepers, only by bees

Transmission within an apiary can occur by infected bees drifting from one hive to another

Beekeepers may not notice dead bees in grass or other vegetation outside their hive

Placing a slab on the ground below the hive entrance is recommended for detection and monitoring

Lou Gilpin, another of our members who also experienced bee losses at the same time as us when we were considering overheating and inadequate ventilation as possible causes, was requested by Geoff (in his usual way…) to write an article for the newsletter. This is attached, and makes interesting reading as it describes, quite eloquently, the history of his colony and the incidence and subsequent decline of the numbers of bees dying. Also attached is a photo of one of Lou and Elaine’s shiny black bees; it’s called ‘robbers 4’, but don’t be put off by the title!

Do let us know if your bees have experienced this – it would be interesting to know how widespread the problem is in our area.

Marion Cooper

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Friday  |  7th August |  | University of Sussex | July, p. 2 |
| Saturday |  8th August | 2.30 pm | Meeting at Teaching Apiary, Burhill School, Hersham | pp. 2-3 |
| Wednesday  | 12th August | 7.00 – 9.00 pm | Candle Making, New Addington (nr. Croydon) | p. 4 |
| Saturday  | 5th September | 1 pm | Garden Meeting, David Parker | p. 3 |
| Thursday - Saturday | 29th – 31st November |  | National Honey Show, St George’s College, Weybridge | p. 4  |

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