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

***Editorial***

There is not much add to last month’s comments on the local bee activities, except to mention that the drones were evicted unusually early from many hives this season. I would draw your attention to an interesting letter in the July issue (page 260) of *BBKA News* in which the writer has some thought-provoking comments on the much publicised ‘Flow Hive’. Another letter on the same page highlights some little discussed or known aspects and implications of washing (or not washing) our beesuits regularly and effectively. We should all be planning the winter feeding of our bees. As you will have heard from Defra, colony starvation has occurred in recent months, sometimes because beekeepers have removed honey from hives without checking brood nests that have been empty because of the lack of nectar in the dry summer. Note that one of our members has made arrangements to supply us with suitable invert sugar feed – see p. 6.

**Your annual subscription to Weybridge Division is due**

The time has come around for subscription renewal and you will find your renewal form as an attachment to this newsletter.

I thought it would be interesting for members to know how the full subscription is made up.

2015/6 2014/5

£ £

BBKA membership 19.00 18.00

BeeCraft magazine 21.00 20.25

BDI 2.00 2.00

Surrey BKA administration costs 1.00 1.25

Weybridge Division .00 1.00

Total 43.00 42.50

As you can see Weybridge has reduced the sub to zero this year to hold the sub as low as possible. The division receives a tax rebate based on the subscription which provides enough to run the association. Should the tax rebate change the sub may have to be reinstated.

There is an additional line on the subscription form for donations to BDI research. In previous years this was for BBKA Research. One of the projects that BBKA funded was as follows:

A grant (£6000 / annum for three years) was made to Dr Declan Schroder and Prof. Ian Jones to part fund in support of Studentship which they have been awarded for research into *‘Receptor binding and host cell entry by Deformed Wing Virus, an emerging agent of honeybee decline’.*

Funding started in September 2013 and continues until September 2015.

As this project ceases in September, BDI have agreed to fund 40% of the follow up on this project. The sponsors are now looking to raise additional funds to cover the remaining 60%.

The details of the follow up project that have been sent to us are as follows:

BDI are pleased to announce that they have agreed to provide major funding for ground breaking research into the relationship between the honey bee and the parasitic varroa mite, in a project code named REViVe (Rolling out the Evolution of resistance to Varroa and DWV).

The three year project will be undertaken jointly by Dr. Declan Schroder from The Marine Biological Association (The MBA) based in Plymouth, and Prof. Stephen Martin from The School of Environmental and Life Sciences, Salford University.

Your committee has agreed that this is a worthwhile project but are leaving it to individuals to decide whether they want to support it. (£5 recommended).

Michael Main - Treasurer

**REMINDERS**

Garden Meeting, Sunday 13th September. Hosted by David Parker, this is a meeting where there will be facilities for members to clean their frames, make some hive parts and bring to show others what they have made previously – see page 3 of August newsletter for full details.

Surrey Training Day, Saturday 19th September – see page 5 or flyer with August Newsletter.

­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­**REPORTS**

**Teaching Apiary meeting, Saturday 8th August**

This was the last meeting at Burhill School in Hersham which has, under Sandra’s direction, served us well for six years as the Weybridge practical teaching apiary; soon after this meeting the hives and equipment were moved to a new and fresh location at St George’s School in Weybridge – see details in next article.

It was good to see so many of our members there, representing a broad cross-section of the membership including current students, group tutors and past students, as well as existing members of the association. We had the unexpected pleasure of welcoming a member of very many years standing (30+?) Peter Hartt, a very experienced beekeeper who, sadly due to poor health, we have not seen at association activities for a number of years. A newspaper reporter, Charlotte Talbot, from The Surrey Advertiser, came with her husband and joined in our activities. Andrew asked that she submit her report to him before publication. The edited report is included as an attachment; we do not know if it has been published yet.

Our thanks go to the youngest member of our association, Aiden Cownley, who kindly agreed to write the main part of this Newsletter report, which follows:

‘During this month's meeting we encountered quite an interesting problem. Both hives 1 and 2 were being robbed by bees from the hives nearby. Hive one seemed to be the most impacted due to the fact that it had lost over a super’s worth of honey. Even though they had done this much carnage they were still gathered at the roof, entering the hive through a hole in the roof. Hive two was also being robbed through a small gap between the super and queen excluder. This was luckily fixed with a bit (a lot) of duct tape. The hive named 14/12 had another problem. Upon opening of the hive's roof hundreds of dead bees were discovered on the crown board. We decided that the problem was most likely the heat killing off the bees at the top where all the heat gathers. At the end of our inspections we decided to have our tea and snacks. Sadly, we had to move because some bees decided to chase us all the way over to the playground outside the school where the apiary was stationed. They still managed to pester us and sting a few unlucky members!’

**ITEMS OF LOCAL AND DIVISIONAL INTEREST**

**Beginners’ theory course and teaching apiary - changes**

On 10 August, the Weybridge Division’s teaching apiary was transferred from Hersham Primary School to its new location at St George’s Junior School in Weybridge. As reported previously, Sandra Rickwood has decided to stand down from the role of apiary manager, having managed the teaching apiary at Hersham since its establishment six years ago. Finding a replacement apiary manager has not been easy but I am pleased to report that Tim and Sally Hutchinson have agreed to take on this important role on a 12-month trial period. While Tim and Sally will be checking the hives and managing the apiary, we will need from time to time to have members help with tasks such as cleaning frames and ground maintenance. Announcements will be put in the monthly newsletters.

Geoff Cooper has decided to stand down from the role of course tutor for the theory course. I will be taking over, using the excellent course material that Geoff and Marion have developed over the last six years.  The theory course runs for ten weeks, usually from the second week of January until mid March.  The practical course also runs for ten weeks and usually starts in late April. A couple of taster sessions took place in late August, where next year’s students could have a look inside a hive before committing themselves to the course.  So far we have about nine people interested in the 2016 course.  Hopefully by the end of the year we will be closer to 20, which is the maximum we aim at.  If you know of anyone who may be interested in becoming a beekeeper, encourage them to contact the course organiser, Sue Lawes, [slawes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:slawes@hotmail.co.uk).

Andrew Halstead – Chairman

**Why is my honey so dark this year?**

This is a question I have been asked many times already this year and will endeavour to explain. In my opinion, this year there are two major factors producing this phenomenon: (1) The lack of significant rainfall during May, June and July. (2) An absolute population explosion in aphids.

During the traditional main flow period, because of the dry weather, there was little or no nectar available from floral sources so the bees gathered honeydew, which, as many of you will know is secreted by aphids and also provides sugars to both ants and wasps.

The honey produced from this source is dark, quite viscous and has a strong flavour. Obviously it is not honey as such because it is not derived from a floral nectary, however it is legal to sell it as honey.

Although “Forest or Pine” honey is prized in parts of Europe and commands a premium price, from our experience of selling honey, particularly at the County Show, it does not enjoy the same status in the UK. People generally want traditional taste and light / medium coloured honey, although prepared correctly it will always be a contender in the Dark Class at honey shows. Because of the strong flavour it is also good for culinary purposes, cakes etc. However, as it does not contain pollen it should not be sold or given to anyone taking it for therapeutic reasons, i.e. hay fever or asthma.

My recommendation, when extracting, would be to try to keep it separate, obviously if a frame contains a mixture of light and dark use your initiative to decide.

Rob Chisholm – August 2015

*Thank you, Rob, for this interesting and informative article.*

**Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus**

Following the report and article on this disease given on Page 7 of last month’s Newletter, we have heard of 3 or 4 other members who have seen unusually large numbers of dead bees outside their hives, some with the characteristic signs of this viral disease – bees that appear black and shiny or greasy, having lost their hairs. There is nothing we can do about this, but the Regional Bee Inspector would be interested to know the extent of the problem, which he and the other Inspectors have seen in several parts of the South East Region. He asks that we let him know of cases, so if your bees have been affected, please tell us or contact him directly. On BeeBase, there is an entry with text, images and now also a short video of bees – particularly one shiny bee – affected with this virus.

Marion C.

**Bee rustling on the increase**

‘The crisis in bee numbers… is leading to a different kind of problem for apiarists: the return of the old fashioned crime of bee rustling’. Thefts have been reported from a honey farm in Anglesea following a spate of thefts in the nearby Conwy Valley. Incidents also occurred in Cambridge in June last year and in Staffordshire. Another example of Market Forces: supply goes down, hence price (and theft) go up.

*i* *Newspaper 8 August 2015 p. 30*

*Beekeepers with publicly accessible hive sites are advised to take note.*

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**National Honey Show - Volunteers stewards needed**

With the new National Honey Show layout, we will be requiring more stewards this year. Your help would be very much appreciated. Beginners are welcome. You do not need to be an expert beekeeper but I can promise that you will learn a lot from the other beekeepers you meet.  The deal is that you get free entry to the show, work for half a day at the direction of the chief steward and the rest of the day is yours to enjoy the show.  You even get £5 to buy a sandwich!   You have to take what’s given so you could be watching over the security of some of the displays whilst talking to visitors, directing visitors around the show, marshalling the crowds in the lecture theatres or anything else that comes up. If you would like to do that please apply as soon as possible to the General Secretary, John Hendrie, 26 Coldharbour Lane, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9JT or [bibba26@talktalk.net](mailto:bibba26@talktalk.net)

To avoid confusion the above is for general stewards, not to be a judge’s steward.  You are very welcome to apply to John if you wish to be a judge’s steward (ie assist a judge as he or she judges each of the almost 200 classes on Thursday morning), but please understand that competition for these jobs is intense and we do give preference to applicants who have started the process of becoming a honey judge. The Show will be at St George’s College, Weybridge.

We will need a few stewards during set up on Wednesday 28th October and the show will be open from Thursday 29th to Saturday 31st October. Opening times are generally 9am to 6pm.  There are also ‘after hours’ events run by organisations such as Bees for Development and the Central Association of Bee-Keepers.

Do come and join the fun.

A request for stewards for the Information Stand run by Surrey BKA will follow. Bob Maurer (Chairman, National Honey Show)

*Far from being a dull activity, this can be very interesting from all sorts of angles, in addition to the satisfaction of being really useful. Why not volunteer to do a session? – Ed.*

**CABK Kenilworth Weekend, Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd November**

I would like to draw the attention of all members, especially our new beekeepers to this annual conference.

It has always been organised by the Central Association of Bee-Keepers, and is intended to appeal to practicing beekeepers who would like to know about the more ‘advanced’ (for the want of a better word) aspects as well as hearing of newly discovered knowledge of honey bees, related insects and other relevant topics. Distinguished speakers at the leading edge of current research, and highly regarded practicing beekeepers are engaged to give about seven lectures on a wide range of topics.

The conference has a very long history. For many years it was held at Leamington Spa and moved about 10 years ago to Stratford on Avon. This year the Conference will be held at Kenilworth for the first time.

If you think that you might be interested to attend this conference, do feel free to contact Marion or Geoff who will be pleased to try to answer any questions about the event. It is often possible to share someone’s car for the journey to Kenilworth – an advantage in several ways.

For full details and a booking form for this conference please refer to the attachment.

**Surrey Training Day, Saturday 19th September, 11am until 3.30 pm**

Just to remind you all to book your places for the next Surrey Training Day!

This should prove to be a very interesting day with lectures by Prof. Ratnieks from the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects (University of Sussex) and Elizabeth Samuelson from Royal Holloway (University of London).

Prof. Ratnieks will update us with the continuing work that they are carrying out into hygienic bees, varroa control and improving forage. As their research work is ongoing, information gathered is constantly changing so if you have attended one of their workshops in the past you may find it useful to hear the very latest results.

Elizabeth Samuelson has been carrying out research into Urban beekeeping. Urban areas are expanding, and at the same time, the number of people keeping bees in cities is increasing.

However, it is still unclear what effect living in a city has on bees. Royal Holloway is conducting a study focusing on the three major threats to honey bees – pesticides, disease and lack of forage – in relation to urbanisation. Are bees exposed to fewer pesticides in the city than the countryside? Are certain diseases more prevalent in cities? What are the differences in foraging habits of urban and rural bees? Elizabeth will outline the plans for the ongoing, multi-year study and discuss the background to the topic. Following the talk, there will be a discussion session where people can share the areas they feel are most in need of research and also their own experiences of keeping bees in urban areas.

£15 per person (Surrey members) £20 per person (Non Surrey members) includes refreshments and a light lunch.

East Horsley Village Hall KT24 6QT

To reserve a place please email Sandra Rickwood at [rickwoodsbka@gmail.com](mailto:rickwoodsbka@gmail.com) or phone 01932 244326.

Full directions and payment details will be provided with confirmation of place.

Sandra Rickwood

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**NBU eLearning programme**

The NBU would like to announce that its eLearning programme for beekeepers is now live and ready for use. The first module ‘Honey Bee Pests, Diseases and Viruses’ covers six main topics; Exotic Threats, Foulbrood, *Varroa*, Adult Bee Diseases and Viruses, Other Brood Disorders and Other Pests. To access this free and exciting platform, you will need to log into BeeBase where you will find an eLearning link to the left hand side of the navigation panel. When clicking on this, you will be re-directed to the eLearning platform where you can access the content. Like all of our material, the aim of the module is to provide you with a good understanding of the issues that might affect colony health. It will be available on most mobile devices and tablets, although you will need to make sure that your web browser is up to date, otherwise you may experience compatibility issues with some of the content.  We would encourage all beekeepers to use this tool to aid their own personal development and as always, would welcome any feedback on the platform.

National Bee Unit

**Discounts on skin care products**

'Bee Good' a beekeeping company from Hampshire have very kindly donated a large hamper full of their skin care range as a raffle prize for the Surrey Bee Day.

They are sponsors of both the BBKA and the Bee Farmers Association and have just started to help fund new apprentice bee farmers.

They  are offering their product range through the [BBKA website shop](http://www.bbka.org.uk/shop/gifts/cosmetics/) with a 10% discount to members aswell as giving a proportion of each sale back to the BBKA.  Check out their site at [Beegood.co.uk](http://Beegood.co.uk/).

**Moving bees for short distances, eg in a garden**

Bearing in mind the ‘2 feet, or 2 mile rule’, when moving bees from one part of my garden to another part, I have either done repeated small moves or first removed the hive from my garden to another apiary for a week or so, then relocated it in the required position in the garden. To save this work and avoid any lifting when recently planning to combine two colonies, I “connected” the two colonies with a horizontal ladder, each end of the ladder being supported on 9" x 9" builders’ blocks, put the colony to be moved on one end of the ladder and easily slid it to the other end 2-3 feet at a time at roughly daily intervals. The bees were quite happy with this. It’s best when using this procedure to check that the bees are finding their hive after each move, and if necessary adjust the distance or frequency of each move as appropriate.

A builder’s plank would serve as well as a ladder.

Geoff Cooper

**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.

**ApiLife Var**

4 doses (8 packs) ApiLife Var varroa treatment - £3.00 / pack. Surplus to requirement at Rowtown Apiary.

Contact Rob Chisholm (Rowtown Apiary Manager) 01483 715779.

**Sugar syrup and fondant for winter feed**

Jonathan Hall has again kindly offered to supply us with winter feed for our bees and has sent the following:

Fondant for sale in 2.5kg sealed bags priced at £3.50 each. The fondant isn't bakers fondant but specifically produced for feeding honey bees. Bags can also be supplied in boxes of five for £14.50. It can be stored for many months or even years providing they are kept sealed, use what you need and wrap the remainder for the future.

Inverted syrup for autumn feeding available in 14kg jerry cans for £22.00.  The convenience of using a ready mixed syrup means no mess in the kitchen and the syrup can be easily transported to the hive.  This syrup doesn't ferment which allows for later autumn feeding.

Contact details:Email: [jonathan-hall@talktalk.net](mailto:jonathan-hall@talktalk.net) Tel: 07850 696844.

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | |
| Sunday | 13th September | 1 pm | Garden Meeting, David Parker | p. 1 and August p. 3 |
| Saturday | 19th September | 11 am – 3.30 pm | Surrey Training Day | p. 5 |
| Thursday - Saturday | 29th – 31st October | All day | National Honey Show, St George’s College, Weybridge | p. 4 |
| Sunday | 15th November | 2 – 5 pm | Weybridge Division AGM, St Peter’s Church Hall, Hersham | Details later |
| Friday (evening) – Sunday (mid day) | 20th - 22nd November |  | Central Association of Bee-Keepers,  Kenilworth Weekend | p. 4 |
| Saturday | 28th November | pm | Surrey BKA AGM,  Cobham Village Hall | Details later |

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| Regional Bee Inspector  Julian Parker 07775 119469 | Swarms  Michael Main – 01932 849080 michaelfmain@hotmail.com |
| LOCAL BEE ADVISORS | |
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