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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISION NEWSLETTER: January 2016 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***A very Happy New Year to you all!***

***Editorial***

As everyone knows, the current winter has been record-breakingly mild and neither the bees nor the flowers are behaving as would be expected for the time of year. For the second winter running, the bees have been very active, and we have had to be vigilant in as far as their winter stores situation has been concerned, and we need to continue with this vigilance for the next 3 months. New beekeepers must be assured that their beekeeping course has correctly informed them that the 40 lb of stores that they were told to provide last September / October was correct; even so the current winter may cause the colonies to starve because of the very unusual level of activity of the bees and the energy that this demands from their stores. We have had two stories from concerned and surprised members which we have to assume relate to this winter. Read these on pages 2-3. Please let us have your thoughts on these stories. Also let us know of any strange experiences with your bees, especially those which seem to relate to the present weather.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Beginners’ Beekeeping Course run by Weybridge Division**

The first of the 10 theory sessions will be held on Monday 18th January at Ashley School, Walton-on-Thames. There are still a few places available, so if you are interested or know anyone who is, please contact Sue Lawes as soon as possible (slawes@hotmail.co.uk).

**Winter Meetings (arranged by our own Division)**

These are as follows:

Tuesday 19th January, 7.45 pm – Talk / discussion on *Oxalic acid sublimation for Varroa control*, by Liz Knee, Chair of Epsom Division. Repeated here are the instructions for this special meeting, which will take place in Epsom for the reasons outlined in the December Newsletter, pages 3-4.

Epsom’s base is behind **The Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Epsom KT17 2AF.** At the entrance there is a white, oval ‘Upper Mill’ sign. It is approached through a gap (easy to miss) in an old brick / flint wall more or less opposite the Wheatsheaf pub and the junction with Mill Lane. From the entrance, drive straight ahead, past buildings on the left; the car park is on the left and the hut on the right. There is limited parking at the venue, but I suggest we try to use it, although there is plenty of room at Bourne Hall, about 5 minutes’ walk away. Double parking may be necessary, but make sure the person you are blocking in is one of our group!

As parking space is limited, I suggest that as many of us as possible meet this end and share cars. If you would like to travel this recommended way, please meet in New Berry Lane car park, Hersham (free after 6.30 pm). This is off Pleasant Place, the road that runs along from the shops opposite the end of Hersham Green, behind St Peter’s Church Hall. After passing the pharmacy (the last shop on the left) take the first left into New Berry Lane, then left again into the car park – it’s only a very short distance from the Green.

**Please meet there in time for a prompt 7.15pm departure – we shall not wait if you are late!**

If you have any queries, please ring me (Marion Cooper, 01932 242179).

In addition to the interest of the talk itself, this is a great opportunity to see and be inspired by Epsom’s site and facilities as we are currently considering a permanent meeting place of our own. Do come!

Friday 5th February – Short presentations by one visiting speaker and three of our own members.

Tuesday 29th March – A talk on ‘Climate, weather and bees’, by Howard Lawes (Sue’s husband).

Please make a note of these dates; further details will be given in later newsletters.

Marion C.

**Surrey BKA Training Day, Saturday 23rd January**

Sandra Rickwood has sent a reminder about this event (Preparing honey and wax), for which places are still available. See Gil Bray’s enthusiastic note on page 4 of the December issue about one of the presenters, and the attachment for full details of the day.

**SBKA General Husbandry Assessment Course,** **Saturday 13th February, in Mitcham**

This is the first part of the course, and is classroom-based; the second part is practical and will be arranged in the spring. Please see the attached flyer for details.

Thank you, Sandra Rickwood

**Quiz Night – Guildford Division, Friday 26th February, 7.30 – 10.30 pm**

Jane Hall, Chair of Guildford Division, has invited Weybridge members to join them for this Quiz, along with Reigate and Kingston, who are already involved. The venue is Jacob’s Well Village Hall, Jacob’s Well Road GU4 7PD. The cost will be about £10 for the evening, which includes a fish and chips supper. The organiser has promised to send us more details later.

Please note that this event is for partners as well as beekeepers.

**Course on Pollen and Nutrition, 12th -13th March, Epsom**

Surrey beekeepers Alastair Welch and Adam Leitch, our very own NBDs, together with another NDB will be presenting a Pollen & Nutrition short course, which is run by the National Diploma in Beekeeping. It is to be held at the Epsom apiary with just 12 students max. This the ratio of students:tutors will allow time for plenty of assistance when students are looking at pollen under the microscope.

The course lasts 2 days and covers all aspects of the nutritional needs of colonies as well as looking at structure and characteristics of pollen under compound microscopes. The course will be of interest to anyone who would like to learn more about pollen analysis and how to prepare pollen to view under a microscope. It will also benefit students taking BBKA Modules & husbandry exams, by broadening their perspective on the wider role of nutrition on colony health and wellbeing. The course costs £80 (which includes a generous subsidy from Defra); for those not resident in England or Wales, the course fee is £225.

The link below will take you to the event booking page, where there are full details:
[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pollen-and-nutrition-registration-19743518395](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pollen-and-nutrition-registration-19743518395%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Additionally, for those that wish to stay up to date with NDB Short Courses along with the venues where NDB lecturers will be giving talks, please “like” our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalDiplomaBeekeeping/?fref=ts>

**BBKA examinations and assessments**

Please refer to the attachment for dates and details regarding the 2016 BBKA examinations and assessments.

Many thanks, Celia Perry (Surrey Examinations Secretary, beeexams@hotmail.co.uk)

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Burhill Allotments Apiary**

As intimated at our recent AGM, Jim Joyce has had to retire as Manager of this apiary, a position he has held since it was set up several years ago and for which we thank him.

One of the beekeepers who has had bees there since the beginning is Edwina Wardle, and she has kindly agreed to take on this responsibility. Please note her contact details in the table at the end of this newsletter.

**Two strange beekeeping stories from our Division (pleases read in conjunction with the Editorial)**

(1) My bees are visible and active right at the top of the top box, and I wondered if they were exhausting their stores rapidly so gave them fondant. However, they showed no interest it.

(2) I looked in my hive and could see only about 100 bees. Has something mysterious or sinister happened?

Without seeing the colonies at the various stages involved, it’s difficult to be very sure what has happened, but we replied as follows:

(1) In the warm temperatures, the bees are not clustering, and they probably have plenty of stores in all parts of the hive. (In response to this story, I checked my own hives and also found bees right at the top - as well as in other boxes below, with plenty of stores.)

(2) Are there really only 100 bees in the hive? Are there a lot of dead bees outside or on the hive floor? Could this be starvation? Any chance of absconding? (A follow-up comment indicated that stores were low, so absconding is suspected. The few bees in the hive could have been taking the rest of the stores.)

I think that we all should check our colonies for stores in the light of these stories and the very warm winter. The safest method is to heft the hives, although this method needs some experience in interpreting. If you feel the need to look inside, do this with a minimum temperature of 12°C, then work very quickly so that there is minimal disturbance to the bees. If stores are low, feed with fondant - not syrup - at this time of year.

**Offer of apiary site**

Hilary Ryan who lives in Shepperton has kindly offered the end of her garden as a possible location for a hive. If anyone is interested in keeping bees in this area, please contact her directly.

coachhilaryryan@gmail.com.

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Combating Nosema**

In the third paragraph of the article under this title in the January issue of the BBKA news, there is reference to the website of DARG (Devon Apicultural Research Group) from which the article can be downloaded for use as a handout sheet. David Parker has sent the following:

This is the link to the Nosema handout, not that obvious on the DARG website:

<http://dargbees.org.uk/Bees%20DARG%202015%20Combating%20Nosema%20Final.pdf>

**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.

**Apiary clothing**

Bee Togs Apiary clothing.  Sale now on:

Go to the Bee Togs website at [www.BeeTogs.co.uk](http://www.beetogs.co.uk/) for some great festive deals on bee suit and bee jacket bundles, or call Martin on 07973 653575.

Martin Major

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Monday | 18th January | 7.30 - 9.30 pm | First Session of Beginners’ Course, Walton | p. 1 |
| Tuesday | 19th January | 7.15 / 7.45 pm | Winter Meeting. Talk on Oxalic acid sublimation, by Liz Knee, AT EPSOM | p. 1 and Dec.pp. 3 and 4 |
| Saturday | 23rd January | 10 am - 4.00 pm | Training Day. Honey and wax. Walton on Thames (details confirmed on booking) | p. 2 andFlyer |
| Friday | 5th February | 7.30 pm | Winter Meeting. Four short presentations. St Peter’s Church Hall, Hersham | p. 2 Details tba  |
| Saturday | 13th February | 10 am - 3.45 pm | General Husbandry Assessment Course, Mitcham | p. 2 and flyer |
| Friday | 26th February | 7.30 - 10.30 pm | Quiz, Guildford Division, Jacob’s Well | p. 2 |
| Saturday | 5th March | 9.30 to 5.00 pm | Beekeeping for beginners, improvers and non-beekeepers. Pulborough | Nov. p. 3 |
| Saturday/Sunday | 12/13th March | 9.30 am – 4.30 pm each day | Epsom apiary | p. 2 |
| Tuesday | 29th March | 7.30 pm | Winter Meeting. Climate, weather and bees, by Howard Lawes. St Peter’s Church Hall, Hersham | Details tba |

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