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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISIONNEWSLETTER: June 2016 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***Editorial***

Since the beginning of May the season seems to have taken off, if not sensationally at least consistently, with strong honey flows being reported by a number of our members. No doubt we have all heard of EFB being found recently in the Woking area, so we need to be aware of the possiblity of finding it in our own colonies. Some of my colonies are very strong; one of these is in the realms of fantasy when you know of its history last autumn, while three others, all with expensive new queens, have done nothing or raised a supersedure queen. What is going on? These queens were sourced from a highly respected supplier whose queens I had enjoyed for at least 15 years with scarcely a single failure, either in introduction or performance. If any have had similar experiences I would love to know about them. You sometimes wonder what you are doing wrong; "…the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." But there may well be another quotation which implies an opposite view (there usually is…). Perhaps some of our members who are good at literature would kindly supply such a quotation (or quotations). It would help some of us to get off the hook. Something along the following lines: “…the fault, dear Brutus, is not in ourselves but in our stars that we are underlings”. On another topic, you will see that we have some more nosema measurements (page 2). They do not make pleasant reading, especially now that there is no longer any approved treatment available to us. As far as I can see the only reason that we now have no treatment is that the manufacturer of Fumidil B is understandably not prepared to meet the tens of thousands of pounds (payable to you know who) to have it relicenced for another period, so that they can serve a very small market. Fumidil B has been used for the treatment of nosema for, to my knowledge, over 30 years. Could not government regulations be changed to enable us to continue to use the only known treatment for nosema? If not we have an avoidable nail in the coffin of the bee population. Perhaps the Law of the Medes and Persians has been reinstated without anyone even telling us.

**REMINDERS and New Items for the near future**

**Honey Sales at Weybridge Farmer’s Market, Saturday June 11th**

Following the great response from members who would like to sell their honey through this outlet, there is a request from the organiser for our help. She points out that it would be an ideal opportunity to advertise the Weybridge Beekeepers, and Richard Hignett, who is co-ordinating our sales, would be pleased to hear from anyone who could spare an hour or so to attend the market stall outside the Swan Hotel, to speak with the public about bees and beekeeping. If you could offer to do this, whether or not you are selling your honey, please contact Richard: richard\_d\_hignett@hotmail.com, or 07801 860044. Thank you.

**Summer meeting, Sunday 12th June, hosted by Geoff and Marion Cooper at Painshill Park, Cobham**

Please see below, under FUTURE EVENTS for details.

**Skep Making Course/Workshop at Reigate, Saturday 11th June**

Please see below, under FUTURE EVENTS for details.

**REPORTS**

**WBK Summer Meeting, Saturday 30th April 2016**

Michael Main welcomed us to his beautiful garden, where the forsythia, broom, bluebells, cherry and oak were in bloom. Of the four people who had confirmed their intention to attend, only 30 or so turned up, with a minimum age of seven weeks (I didn't ask the upper age limit).

Michael demonstrated a shook swarm procedure under a gazebo. This was good planning, as the forecast heavy rain arrived just when the hive was opened. The children present were fascinated by the inside of the hive, but one fell victim to a sting on the hand. He was understandably upset, but recovered bravely with the help of more suitable (enormous!) gloves. Michael took us through the hive without using smoke, as he knows he has placid bees and finds smoke can agitate them. He had also taken the precaution of moving the hive with brood away from its original site, where the flying bees remained, out of his way.

The reason for the shook swarm was NOT for swarm control, but to replace old comb. It was a very strong colony in a double brood box, with eighteen frames containing brood. Frames of brood were used to make up nucleus hives to raise new queens.

A second, much smaller colony was inspected as a potential donor of queen cells to the newly made up nucs.

The planned demonstration of oxalic acid vaporisation did not take place, as the equipment had been left behind. I would certainly be interested to see this at a future meeting.

We had a delicious tea, as usual, and time to catch up on how our bees had fared over this trying winter and cold spring. Varroa levels are a serious concern. David Parker reminded us that we can download PDFs from the NBU website, and had brought some copies of the excellent shook swarm instructions.

Thanks again to Michael for a very successful meeting.

Jane Hunter

**Nosema test results**

Some more samples have been tested since the last newsletter. These have been added to those published last month giving the following overall totals:

**Infestation level Number of samples**

nil 5 (5)

low 3 (3)

medium 10 (6)

high 19 (4)

The figures in brackets are quoted from the last newsletter.

You will see that the infestation is higher on the more recent figures. Is this because they were checked a month later in the year? Are these high figures fairly general throughout local (or UK) apiaries? If so, does this partly explain the poor development rates of some promising early colonies? Some more food for thought and comment.

Anne Miller, updated by Geoff Cooper

**Summer Meeting, Sunday 15th May, with Peter Bowbrick at Garsons, Esher**

Unfortunately, as a precaution following an EFB outbreak in our area, this meeting had to be cancelled. This was very disappointing as Peter’s meetings are always very helpful and much enjoyed. However, he has kindly offered to try and arrange a meeting for us later in the year.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Summer Apiary Meeting at the Painshill Park Apiary, Sunday 12th June, 2.30 pm**

***Please note three very important things about this meeting:***

***1. The date originally advertised was Saturday 11th June. This was changed on request to Sunday, 12th.***

***2. Check emails before coming to be sure that this meeting is going ahead; the final decision will be made a few days before, and the meeting may be cancelled if there is any spread of the EFB.***

***3. Access to the Apiary is NOT via the main Visitors’ Entrance to Painshill Park or the Guest Entrance near the Sainsbury’s roundabout that we have used before; there is a better way – read on…***

Access Details:

For this meeting only, the way to the Apiary is from the Painshill roundabout where the A245 (Byfleet to Cobham road) crosses the A3. At this roundabout proceed as if to go down the slip road to Guildford on the A3. Just before the slip road there is a gated entrance and a black sign board with the wording Pains Hill Private Residences; there are black iron gates between two white lodge houses. Approach the gates slowly and they will open. The Apiary is in the first field on the right, after going over one speed bump in the drive. We have permission from Painshill Park to use this entrance and to park in the field, in a mowed clearing to the left, inside the gate. From there it is a very short walk along the boundary fence to the hives, where you will see Geoff’s car (silver estate) parked.

***Important note*:** Our relationship with the Painshill residents over many years has been very good indeed. **However** there has been one resident over that time who has always been what could most kindly be described as ‘obstructive’. I want to assure you all that should he or his wife challenge any of us, whatever he says, we all have full permission and right to have our meeting and park our cars in the field; this has all been agreed with the Painshill estate manager. Hopefully you will not have the embarrassment of having to meet the ‘obstructive’ resident, but should this happen I would strongly advise you not to be drawn into any debate, but refer him to Marion or myself. Please do not feel that any shadow is cast by this on our activities; Painshill management and the other residents are very well aware of this resident and he does not have their support for his views.

Topics and activities for the meeting:

Some of these items, treated in depth, would occupy several meetings. What we are hoping to do is to expose all who come to this meeting to at least one beekeeping practice with which they are not familiar, but which they may have heard of.

We are planning to cover the following:

queen rearing and super clearance, as advertised (please bring any clearing devices that you may have)

inspection of a hive that went into winter on less than two frames

demonstration of a Rose Hive

inspection of a hive using only shallows and no queen excluder (à la Rose management method)

some big colonies, for the beginners to see – and handle

Bailey comb change

varroa counts

We intend to arrange the members into groups so that everyone sees each item in the ‘programme’, after which we can share each other’s ideas.

A Special Extra Item is the official opening of our newly constructed shed – details on the day…

Following the meeting we will be having a picnic tea in the field near the parked cars.  Tea, coffee and milk will be provided.  Please bring your own mugs, something to share for the picnic, a flask of hot water if possible and a seat if you wish to be comfortable. Ring Geoff / Marion if you have any questions (01932 242179).

**Dates and topics for the rest of the Summer Meetings**

Full details of each will be given monthly in the newsletters.

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| **Hosts** | **Date** | **Main Subject** | **Secondary Subject** |
| Chris Burnett and Sue Lawes | 9th July | Top Bar Hive | Finding and marking a queen (or drone) |
| David Parker | 20th August | Make it Session | Guildford and Weybridge Divisions |
|  | 3rd September | End of Season Social | Location TBC |
|  |  |  |  |

David Parker

**Skep Making Course/Workshop at Reigate, Saturday 11th June**

One-day Skep Making Course/Workshop, organised by Celia Perry.

Full details from Richard Bradfield

**Bee health and disease day, Saturday 9th July**

Should any of our members be holidaying in Leicestershire in July they may like to attend this day!

Details on attachment.

**8th Caribbean Beekeeping Congress 12-16th September 2016**

For details of this event, [click here](http://www.acboonline.com/announcement-invitation/).

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Cannabis honey**

The stories about French bees making cannabis honey are amusing but are you sure they were not an April Fool spoof story?  *Yes, I am as sure as I can be that they were not a spoof. –Ed.*

Andrew Halstead

**What is ‘a frame of brood’? (a response to last month’s article)**

I believe in keeping beekeeping simple.  There are many other things that a beekeeper needs to assess and keep in mind when going through a colony. Trying to make an accurate assessment of the amount of brood is difficult, particularly if you want a system that other people attending the hive can follow.  The simple answer is to count the number of frames that are in use by the queen, regardless of the quantity of sealed/unsealed brood.  If a more detailed assessment is required it would be necessary to add up half and quarter filled frames to get a figure of whole frames, but I would soon lose count!

Andrew Halstead

**The Rather Embarrassing Accolade of earliest WBK swarm ? (a response to last month’s article)**

As new beekeepers we are just entering our second year, our 2 colonies having survived the mild winter with plenty of food. As newbies we were very conscious of not letting them starve,  and had religiously checked for signs of swarming. Our first inspection of the year was on a warm day in mid March and we were staggered how large one of the colonies had become.  We managed 3 further inspections before a wet and cold April caused us to miss 2 weeks in a row.  A back injury prevented a 3rd consecutive weekly inspection.

When inspecting on 1st May the bees seemed quieter and we counted 23 (mainly capped) queen cells. We couldn’t find our marked queen and soon realised we had suffered an early swarm.  We saw one queen hatching whilst we were deciding which queen cell to keep, and assuming the swarm left when the cell was capped we estimate this occurred around 25th April.

Several more queens hatched in the ice cream tub where we had put the queen cups, so we were able to make up 2 nuc colonies and give 2 queens away.  All 3 of our new queens have mated and are laying, so what started off being a potential disaster has turned out OK – in fact, we’ve just extracted 2 supers from this colony.

We are somewhat confused why they didn’t seem to die back over the winter – did the queen continue laying all through ?  Maybe we over-fed them, and molly-coddled them with insulation around the hive walls and roof, so they thought it was still summer ?

Not sure what we’ve learnt from all this (other than don’t get a bad back during pre-swarming season !)

 Paul & Helen Bunclark

*To finish up from a potential disaster situation with two supers of honey (now apparently three), three new laying queens and two more to give away seems like a great bit of beekeeping – thanks for this encouraging story, Paul and Helen.*

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Asian Hornet – another warning**

Have a look at the following video: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-36349379>

I am picking up that the Asian Hornet is a very serious threat to bees in this country, and that it is almost certain to be with us sooner rather than later. I feel strongly that all beekeepers should learn to recognise it, and be prepared to act appropriately should they see one.

*Thanks to Richard Hignett and David Parker for drawing this clip to our attention.*

**Special book offer**

[*Following the Wild Bees: The Craft and Science of Bee Hunting*](http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10669.html) by Thomas Seeley is available to members of the Surrey Beekeepers’ Association at £14.00 (rrp £17.95) with free postage and packaging in the UK. To buy at this special price please either call 01243 842165 or email [sales@upguk.com](mailto:sales@upguk.com), quoting the special offer code BEE16.

**Discount on books published by *BeeCraft***

In case this needed pointing out again as a reminder in the next newsletter, personally I wasn't aware that BeeCraft did 20% discount on some of their books. This offer applies to bulk orders for Divisions.

Richard Hignett

**Soft set honey not setting**

As someone who had not made soft set honey I set about making some this year for the Surrey Show; after taking advice and looking at videos online I felt prepared.  I followed all the instructions and to my shock, the honey did not set – it went to a thick treacle.  My alarm bells should have gone off when I went to get my bucket of honey from last year that I was using and it was still liquid.  I therefore took an opportunity to raise this with John Hamer. He advised me that last year was a very strong ‘lime’ year, and lime honey is high in fructose and does not set very easily – hence my bucket of honey was still liquid after six months plus.  To get my honey to set I would need to add a higher proportion of seed honey that the normal 10% recommended.  I am off to try and get it to set now!  Just in case anyone else is having the same challenges.

David Parker

**How you might have sold your bees in the past (if you were in Holland)**

Do watch this delightful video of skep beekeeping sent by Richard Hignett:

<https://www.facebook.com/354920224599624/videos/882453151846326/>

Watch the short one of the busy little girl cleaning frames among the bees as well.

**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 secondhand 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 for sale**

**Bee Togs Apiary Clothing - Clearance Sale Special Offer**

Special offer for the clearance of Bee Togs apiary clothing.  Suits £55, Jackets £45.  Contact Martin Major direct on 07973 653575 or email at [BeeTogs@gmail.com](mailto:BeeTogs@gmail.com). You need to contact me direct as these cannot be bought from the web site at this price.  Hurry whilst stocks last.

**Bees for sale**

**In due course we will have available a number of COLONIES WITH 2016 MATED QUEEN (National Standard Brood Frames)**

Price for 1 brood box full with mated 2016 Queen, bees, brood at all stages and stores: £195 (Larger colonies will be available at extra charge).

For more information, please contact me - details below. (Feel free to contact me if you wish to see the bees beforehand.)

**NUCS can be pre-ordered**

6 Frame Nucs (National Standard frames) with 2016 mated queen.

Supplied in 6 frame Poly Nuc. Price: £140 + £20 nuc deposit which is refundable on return.

5 Frame Nucs (National Standard frames) with 2016 mated queen.

Supplied in 5 frame Correx Travelling Box. Price: £145.

The Nucs will have a mated 2016 Queen, locally reared from our gentle breeding stock, together with a combination of her brood in various stages, and stores.  The Queens will be marked white.

These nucs will probably be available from end of June onwards (maybe earlier, depending on weather and mating season).

**Astrid Bowers-Veenman** (Hog’s Back Bees) Location: Ash Green (between Guildford and Farnham, just off the A31)  Distance from Weybridge: 12 miles (as the crow flies)  **Tel.No.: 01252 330229 / Mobile: 07803 069798**

**Email:**[**astrid@coginternational.co.uk**](mailto:astrid@coginternational.co.uk)

**LASI Queen Bees bred for hygienic behaviour**

We are emailing you to inform you about the launch of LASI (Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects) Queen Bees – rearers of Queen Bees bred for hygienic behaviour. LASI provides UK beekeepers with honey bees bred for disease resistance using hygienic behaviour based on scientific research. We would like to invite you to explore our new website, visit our store and buy your very own hygienic Queen Bee.

The link to the LASI Queen Bee website is - <http://www.lasiqueenbees.com/>

 The LASI Queen Team

*Many beekeepers will be aware of the research carried out by the University of Sussex on this subject under the direction of Professor Ratnieks. Out of curiosity David Parker and I have ordered two of these queens. They cost £45, about the same as most other suppliers, and coming from a university, we can be pretty sure that, unlike all other bees that we have met, they will have read the books.*

**STOP PRESS**

**Surrey County Show – Honey Show results**

This letter needs to go out now, as we are going away in a few minutes’ time, so anyone interested in the details will have to check online. The Weybridge results will be sent out to all of you later.

**More Shakespeare – Much ado about nothing**

When we arrived home last night, after a long day at the Surrey Show, followed by a check on our Painshill colonies before the holiday, we found an answer phone message from a friend, telling us that her daughter – a sensible 50-year-old lady, we thought – had found 4 dead bees on her patio. They saved them in a jar as they wondered if they had ‘this parasite’, and were intending to contact the Council about them after the Bank Holiday. We think we have saved Warrington Council a job… Geoff and Marion C.

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | |
| Saturday | 11th June | All day | Skep making, Reigate | p. 4 |
| Sunday | 12th June | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Geoff Cooper,  Painshill, Queen rearing, super clearing and other topics | p. 2-3 |
| Thursday - Saturday | 9th -11th June |  | South of England Show, Ardingly | May, p. 4 |
| Saturday | 9th July | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Chris Burnett & Sue Lawes, Top-bar hive, queen finding and marking | Details next month |
| Monday | 1st August | 7.00 pm | Jamie Ellis - “Addressing the sustainability of beekeeping in the 21st century” | May, p. 3 |
| Saturday | 20th August | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, David Parker,  ‘Make-it’ session | Details later |
| Saturday | 3rd September | tba | End-of-season social event | Details later |
| Thurs - Sat | 27-29 October | All day | National Honey Show, Esher | March p. 4 and attachments |

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