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

***Editorial***

The last week or so has seen the event that beekeepers have been dreading: the arrival of the Asian Hornet in this country. From our limited knowledge of this insect, I imagine that many of us feel that our beekeeping is under very serious threat. There is certainly at least one aspect of its behaviour for which it’s difficult to imagine a solution: the reported terrorising of a honeybee colony so that the bees will not leave their hive. This would seem to make the use of ingenious guards at the hive entrance of little use. There is the Vita hornet trap, which I will certainly try out assuming the need for action is coming, but I can’t help wondering if we would catch enough hornets to make any significant difference to our bees. We need to catch the queen hornets which are produced by the hundred from each nest each season. But as usual I am being pessimistic; we and the bees seem to be living reasonably well with Varroa, despite the sinking feeling we all had over 20 years ago when it arrived. I remember Bernard Mobus\* writing that the arrival of Varroa would be the best thing that could happen for beekeeping in this country as it would mean the end of bad beekeepers. So what do you think would be a way forward in helping us to live with this new threat? Some lateral thinking is needed to pass on to the researchers for them to develop. See attached BBKA Press Release on page 4.

\* *an author who collaborated (with Clive de Bruyn) on the Varroa Handbook and was described as ‘one of the leading practitioners and thinkers in the craft of beekeeping’.*

**Outstanding Subscriptions for the year 2016-2017: these were due by October 1st**

Many of us have not yet renewed our membership. If you have not done so, please return the form to our Treasurer, Michael Main, as soon as possible. Details were sent out with the September Newsletter and are attached again to this one.

**AGM, Weybridge Division - November 6th, 2.30 – 5:00**

Please do your best to attend this important meeting at Cobham Village Hall,  Lushington Drive, Cobham KT11 2LU.

*Any suggestions?* If you have ideas or comments about what we do or what you would like Weybridge Division to consider doing, please mention these at the meeting or to a member of the Committee before or afterwards.

***Honey Tasting*** After the business part of the afternoon, we shall have our now traditional honey-tasting competition, devised some years ago by the late John Hudson. All beekeepers attending are asked to bring a sample of their own honey in an **unlabelled one-pound jar** – please note this, as in the past jars of various sizes have sometimes been used which could result in the identification of the member (for good or ill) - about an inch of honey in the jar will be plenty. Your sample will be given a random number, and the procedure will be explained. Colour, texture and appearance count for nothing in this competition – it is only the taste that will be assessed (by everyone present), and the Les Gray trophy will be awarded to the beekeeper whose honey attracts the most votes.

***Beekeeping Equipment*** Do bring any spare items of equipment that you have for sale or disposal. There is plenty of room in the hall to spread these out to make a ‘sales area’.

***Refreshments*** Tea/coffee, etc. will be provided, but please bring a plate of food (savoury or sweet) that we can share for tea.

If you can't bring any of the above, just come anyway! We look forward to seeing you there.

Anne Miller

**Surrey Beekeepers’ Association AGM 26th November**

Notice is hereby given that the 138th Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Beekeepers’ Association will be held on Saturday 26th November 2016 at 2pm at Tooting & Mitcham Football Club. The meeting will be followed by tea and a talk by James C. Makinson who is a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant at the Bee Sensory Behavioural Ecology Lab at Queen Mary University of London. Venue: Tooting & Mitcham Football Club, Imperial Fields, Bishopsford Road (A217), Morden, Surrey SM4 6BF. The meeting will be hosted by Wimbledon Division.

**REMINDERS and notice of New Items**

**Central Association of Bee-Keepers Annual Conference, Friday 18th - Sunday 20th November 2016**

Full details and an application form for this event, which was mentioned last month, are attached.

**REPORTS**

**Oxalic acid sublimation treatment - when to do a winter treatment: Report on a LASI Workshop**

David Parker recently attended a workshop at the University of Sussex, where a lot of work has been done on oxalic acid sublimation for the control of Varroa. In particular, the report highlights a number of refinements to the timing of the treatment. A detailed summary of the information that he obtained from the workshop is in an attachment to this Newsletter. The report is illustrated with a number of helpful bar charts.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Courses at East Surrey Bees**

Celia and David Rudland (East Surrey Bees) reported that they enjoyed talking to our members earlier in the year and had very positive feed back, so some may be interested in future courses that they are offering; details of two of these are given below.

The apiary is in Whyteleafe just off the A22, three miles north of junction 6 of the M25. On the days of the courses, gates open at 10 for a prompt start at 10.30 am and they aim to finish by 4.00pm. Exact details of how to find the apiary will be sent when you confirm your attendance. For any further details and a booking form don’t hesitate to contact them,   [enquire@eastsurreybees.co.uk](mailto:enquire@eastsurreybees.co.uk)

[www.eastsurreybees.co.uk](http://www.eastsurreybees.co.uk/) Apiary 0208 6607753, Office 01883 622788, Mobile 07798 915480

**Mead making day Sunday 30th October 2016 at East Surrey Bees**

This is very largely a practical day where we take you through the whole process, from making the must to sampling some we made earlier. We cover the equipment you will need and then go through the processes of starting off, racking off the lees and bottling the finished product. We cover the legal side of the process if you want to think about selling your honey wines and talk about exhibiting at the local honey show.

Cooking quality honey can be bought to take away with you and make your own first vintage!

**Candle making course Sunday 27th November 2016 at East Surrey Bees**

This day course is designed for anyone who wants to make decorative candles with beeswax.  Starting from collecting wax from your hive, through the initial cleaning processes, to the production of clean slab wax blocks and making rolled, moulded and dipped candles. We also look at, safety issues, the equipment needed, showing at the local division honey shows and briefly the history of beeswax candles.  We provide all the equipment and materials needed for you to produce your own candles during the day because this is essentially a practical course and you get to take the candles you’ve made away with you.  The day starts at 10.30am and finishes at 4pm and there is a ploughman’s type lunch provided along with tea and coffee available all day. Cost is £60 for the day including, lunch, refreshment and the candles you make.

All day courses are inclusive of a ploughman’s lunch and refreshments throughout the day. All baked food is home-made.

Celia and David Rudland

**Microscopy Course**

Reigate Beekeepers Association (RBKA), a division of Surrey Beekeepers, is offering a winter course covering all aspects of beekeeping microscopy. The course is 10 sessions, on Wednesday evenings from 8-10pm spread over autumn 2016 and early spring 2017. The course broadly covers the BBKA Microscopy exam syllabus, but with a few other areas which would be of interest to those studying BBKA Theory Module 5 (Anatomy) but is equally suited to those who just want to learn practical skills, perhaps for their own disease analysis or for general interest. Topics include Acarine and Nosema disease analysis, making pollen slides, analysing pollen from your own honey to dissecting/preparation and mounting of anatomical structures onto slides as well as general anatomy dissection.

The course is taught by Celia Perry, Master Beekeeper and Adam Leitch, Master Beekeeper, NDB. Both Celia and Adam hold the BBKA Microscopy certificate, and the course will be hosted at Reigate's new teaching apiary pavilion in Newdigate, Surrey. All materials and tools are supplied, but attendees will be required to provide their own compound and dissecting microscopes. (Both Surrey and various divisions have their own microscopes, so contact us to discuss if you do not have your own). The course fee will be £120 for RBKA members, and £130 for anyone else. To request an application form, please email Adam on [Adam.leitch@gmail.com](mailto:Adam.leitch@gmail.com" \t "_blank)

**Weald and Downland Autumn Show at Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex, 8th and 9th October**

The Horticultural show at the Weald and Downland Autumn Show currently acts as our honey show and this year we have two classes runny and set.

For further information about the Horticultural Show please contact

Sue O’Keeffe 01243 811013 events@wealdown.co.uk

Kate Shears 01243 811011 tradestands @wealdown.co.uk.

*The deadline for entering material has passed (16th September), but a visit could be enjoyable.*

**A talk on mead making and tasting, Thursday 13th October**

I wondered if your members would be interested in attending a talk and tasting on Mead making by Mike Wagstaff of 'Chalice Mead'.  The talk will be at St Peter's Hall in Bishops Waltham on Thursday 13th October at 7.00pm. A small charge of two pounds will be charged to cover costs and tea/coffee etc.

Mike's website is [http://www.chalicemead.co.uk](http://www.chalicemead.co.uk/AboutUs)

John Hammond, Meridian Beekeepers

**2017 Surrey Bee Day**

The next Surrey Bee Day will be on the 18th February 2017 at Cobham Village Hall. The theme to be 'The Seasons'.

Concern has been expressed about the noise level and the cold hall. As it is the beginning of half term there should not be any young ballerinas and if there are they will not be in the small hall.

Hopefully the heating system has now been mended.

Hope to see you all there - it will be the 12th Surrey Bee Day.

Sandra Rickwood

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Martin Major – see cover photo on the September issue of *Beecraft***

Congratulations to Martin, our second member to have one of their honey bee photographs printed on the cover of *Beecraft*; one of Jane Hunter’s photos was chosen some months ago.

Who will be our next member to win this monthly competition?

*Apologies to Martin for not pointing this out in the September Newsletter.*

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Asian Hornet Press Release from the BBKA**

As you will all know by now the Asian hornet has been found in Gloucester. I have just spoken with DEFRA and they are anxious that we work together and they have asked me to send out this identification sheet and press release.

The hornet was found by a beekeeper and other beekeepers in the immediate area have found hornets hawking in front of their hives. There is a 20 km incident  zone around the hive and the National Bee Unit

(NBU) are currently looking for the hive. If they find it they will destroy it.

Fortunately the NBU have been expecting it for some time and had a contingency plan ready to go.

They have caught several hornets and looked at their genetics and these hornets are related to those in France and Alderney. So they have not come in from China. This is important because they are obviously breeding from quite a small genetic pool and have been weakened from inbreeding. And we have to ask ourselves if they flew directly from France to Gloucester. Unlikely I think. So maybe they are in other parts of the country. We don't know. So far every hornet found has been found by a beekeeper.

As you may know, if the hornets gain access to a colony they will bring the rest of their nest mates and the colony will be destroyed very quickly. Our European bees have no natural defences.

They are currently examining every hive in the incident zone. But the problem is they cannot be sure they know the whereabouts of every beekeeper and every hive.

So please: **If you are not already registered on BeeBase, register now. If you are already registered update your entry to ensure all your apiaries are included.**

Send this email to every beekeeper that you know so they can do the same.

Please can BBKA Trustees send this or a similar email to all their Link Associations and ask them to ask all their members to register (if they have not already done so) on BeeBase as soon as possible.

Also please look through any wasp traps you have up to see if there are any hornets in there.

And you might want to put some traps up, the same as for wasps.

The Asian  hornet is a very serious pest of honey bees. **Please look at the attached identification sheet** and make sure every one else (not just beekeepers) are aware of what it looks like... remember yellow legs.

If you see an Asian hornet please do not try and find the nest, [but] contact the non native species people at [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) giving details.

Thanks,  Margaret Murdin -  Chair BBKA

*The latest news is that one nest has been found and destroyed, but extreme vigilance is still required.*

**Over-priced pest controllers?**

I recently had a call from a very worried lady who had a honey bee nest in the main trunk of her magnificent oak tree. For reasons of safety it was necessary for her to have some tree surgery carried out on it. Her regular tree surgeon was not happy to do his work with the bees there, and and apart from the illegality of destroying honey bees, she did not want to do this anyway. She approached a pest control firm who said they would come one evening to erect scaffolding to reach the nest (only 14 feet above the ground!), smoke the bees then fit a net around the hole. The tree surgeon could then come and do his work without the risk of being stung. On completion of the work the pest control fim would return to remove their equipment.

The price quoted by the firm for their part (not including the actual tree surgery) was £1200 (no typo here: twelve hundred pounds is correct). I was able to put her in touch with a beekeeper who does this kind of work for people at a civilised rate. Hopefully this has led to a satisfactory conclusion.

Before I left the lady, I explained that it is possible to remove a colony from a hollow tree, though it does take a few weeks. Thus she could preserve the colony without the posibility of future trouble and expense.

As a life-long DIY person, I was shocked to hear that outrageous prices such as this are becoming more and more common in bee and other areas. Is this a way in which we are (all) being ‘groomed’?

Geoff Cooper

**A Guinness Book of Records wasp nest?**

Do have a look at these remarkable pictures, especially the four and a half foot long entrance tunnel that the wasps have built to the huge nest.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-37471529>

*Thanks to David Parker for sending this link.*

**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.

**Bees for sale**

We will have various overwintered colonies for sale in spring 2017.

6 Frame nucs with 2017 mated Queen can be pre-ordered at any time from now. These are likely to be available from mid June 2017 onwards depending on the weather.

All our colonies and Queens are locally reared.

**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)

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | |
| Wednesdays | Autumn onwards  10 sessions | 8-10pm | Microscopy Course, Reigate BKA | p. 3 |
| Sat - Sun | 8-9 October | All day | Autumn Show, Singleton | p. 3 |
| Thursday | 13th October | 7.00pm | Talk by Mike Wagstaff of 'Chalice Mead' | p. 3 |
| Thurs - Sat | 27-29 October | All day | National Honey Show, Esher | www.honeyshow.co.uk |
| Sunday | 30th October | 10am - 4pm | Mead Making,  East Surrey Bees | p. 2 |
| **Sunday** | **6th November** | **2.30-5pm** | **Weybridge Division AGM,**  **Cobham** | **p. 1** |
| Thursday | 10th November | 7.15 pm | Talk, Ron Hoskins: The Swindon Bee, Botley, Hants | p. 3 |
| Fri - Sun | 18-20 November |  | Central Association Conference, Kenilworth | p. 2 |
| Saturday | 26th November | 2.00pm | Surrey BKA AGM, Morden | p. 2 |
| Sunday | 27th November | 10am - 4pm | Candle Making,  East Surrey Bees | p. 2 |
| Saturday | 17th February | All day | 12th Surrey Bee Day, Cobham | p. 3 |

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| Paul Hildersley – 07827 916186 |  |

**An extraordinary colony**

I have briefly mentioned this colony in a past newsletter, and it might be of interest give its history quoted from my hive notes.

16/7/2015 new purchased Buckfast queen introduced to a nucleus colony (N1) at Painshill apiary

21/7/2015 brood in all stages but two sealed queen cells and no sign of the queen; the queen cells were removed and used to set up another nucleus colony (N2)

9/8/2015 neither queen cell in N2 developed. In N1 there was still brood in all stages and also two more sealed queen cells. These queen cells were removed and opened and were found to contain only soft larvae (i.e. they were newly sealed).

12/8/2015 N1: small amount of unsealed brood and sealed brood and a few eggs. There were three more queen cells; one was destroyed and the other two left.

21/8/2015 N1: a new queen was seen. One of the two queen cells was opened, the other still closed. Both cells were removed.

28/8/2015 A brief inspection showed a good number of bees and more frames were needed.

1/9/2015 N1 moved to garden with the intention of combining it with another colony (in fact, this combination was never done).

19/9/2015 An unmarked queen was seen, and a few eggs. The bees showed interest in her so she was marked (blue).

2/10/2015 Queen, unsealed brood and sealed brood seen, but no eggs seen (but it was October) about 5 frames of bees

14/3/2016 Four, 14x12 frames part covered with bees plus a few bees in the super stores box

8/5/2016 truly astonishing progress since initial supersedure. now on a full 14x12 brood box plus a shallow brood box. It also has a super

20/5/2016 2nd super added

16/6/2016 3rd super added before this date (not recorded)

6/7/2016 sudden increase of honey in supers; 4th super added

9/7/2016 5th super added

17/7/2016 6th super added

18/7/2016 no bees or honey in super 6; honey flow stopped? (confirmed 3 days later)

?/?/2016 ??lb honey extracted

Having set this history down, the growth of the colony did not seem so dramatic as when watching it actually happen daily. As the above shows, the comment on 8/5 2016 was in response to the very rapid growth since 14/3 2016 in the light of the extremely unpromising start of the first few weeks following the introduction of the new queen on 16/7/2015. This was one occasion when, late last year, I decided to let it carry on the basis of, ‘Who knows what may happen? I might even finish up with a reasonable nuc next spring.’

One of the delights of beekeeping is that the best queens may let you down, but the (seemingly) rubbish ones may turn out trumps (perhaps THAT one will as well!).