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

***A happy Christmas to you all***

***Editorial***

There has been much progress with the negotiations for the establishment of a permanent building and apiary for our local beekeepers’ group. You are all encouraged to read a report on this work on pages 3-4, and to take up the invitation for a visit that is offered to you on this page.

In a world with apparently endless strife at all levels, it is nice to be able to read of anything that generates harmony. I suppose we may know of some instances of this in which bees have taken part. A recent newspaper report is such an example. To end the year on a happy note, a summary is given on page 5.

**Subscriptions**

Any members who have not paid at this point are being considered as ‘Lapsed’. If you are one of these, may we remind you that this means you will have no insurance (Public Liability or Bee Diseases), and no further issues of BeeCraft. The BBKA is considering a £10 joining fee for new members, and Lapsed members who rejoin after that would be considered as New, so do contact Michael Main asap if you wish to remain a member for 2016-17.

**Membership Secretary Vacancy**

After several years in this post, Joan Johnson wishes to pass on the responsibility. She has dealt with this year’s subscriptions / renewals and everything is on a database and in good order. Please consider if YOU may be able to take on this routine, but important role. If you would like to know more, Joan will be happy to enlighten you – contact her by email: joan.johnson55@virgin.net

**REMINDERS and notice of New Items**

**Visit to possible new site for our activities, Monday 12th December, 3-4 pm**

We are pleased to invite all members to a first viewing of the building and plot that may be our future base. The item on pages 3-4 gives details of the visit and of this exciting venture and we encourage as many members as possible to come along. The site has been neglected for many years, so it is its potential and not its present condition that should be considered. There is plenty of space on the site for FUTURE parking but for this visit, please park considerately for residents in Pleasant Place or leave your car on the green in Burhill Road or other adjacent areas.

**Beginners’ Beekeeping Course, starting Monday January 16th**

Full details under FUTURE EVENTS, page 2.

**Beekeeping Refresher Course / Preparation for the BBKA Basic Assessment, starting end January / beginning February**

Full details under FUTURE EVENTS, page 3.

**REPORTS**

**Weybridge AGM, Sunday November 6th, Cobham Village Hall**

1. The meeting was attended by about 30 members. The full minutes will be issued shortly.

2. Thanks, flowers and a gift were given to Sandra Rickwood for her service of very many years, first as as Secretary, then Treasurer of the Division, after which she remained on the Committee for a few more years. She simultaneously served on the Council of the Surrey Beekeepers Association for 25 years and was its Secretary for 12 years.

3. The election of Jane Hunter as the new Weybridge Secretary (contact details at the end of the Newsletter).

3. Thanks and vouchers were presented to Joan Johnson, retiring as Membership Secretary, and Noreen Buckley (in absentia) who is retiring from the Committee.

4. A presentation and discussion on the site of the proposed new base for the Weybridge Division. See items on pages 1 and 3-4 for more details concerning this.

**Surrey BKA AGM, Saturday November 26th, Morden**

This event was poorly attended when considering the large number of members in Surrey, but was splendidly hosted by Wimbledon Division and enjoyed by those who were there. The formal part of of the meeting went much as usual and the Minutes will be available soon. When considering the election / re-election of Officers, it was announced that Sandra Rickwood would be stepping down from the Council, to which she has belonged for 25 years, and relinquishing her position as Secretary, which she has held for the last 12 years. After the AGM she was thanked, presented with flowers and Eva Crane’s Book of Honey and we drank a toast to her. She cut a cake – a work of art specially made for her by Chris Chisholm – and this was shared over tea.

Julie Hogarth (Kingston Division) is the new SBKA Secretary and we wish her well.

Marion Cooper

 **FUTURE EVENTS**

**Beginners’ Beekeeping Course, starting January 16th**

As in previous years, the Weybridge Division will be running a training course for people wanting to become beekeepers. The course is in two parts.  The theory course lasts ten weeks, starting at 7.30pm on Monday 16th January and ending on 20th March.  The venue will be the Hersham Community Trust hall in Burhill Road, Hersham KT12 4BJ.  This is followed by a ten week practical course on Saturday mornings, starting in late April (date to be confirmed). The practical course is held in our teaching apiary in Weybridge. The total cost for the theory and practical courses is £125.  It could be an ideal Christmas present!   If you know of anyone who might be interested, please ask them to contact Sue Lawes as soon as possible - Sue Lawes, 29 Sayes Court, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1NA, or via email slawes@hotmail.co.uk

Andrew Halstead

**Winter Meeting, Thursday January 19th, 7.30pm, Hersham Community Trust Hall**

This evening will be in the format that has been popular in previous years, when 3 or 4 of our own members give short presentations. The programme has yet to be finalised but the speakers so far are:

**Richard Emmett**, who will tell us in more detail about beekeeping in the part of Africa where he is involved

**David Parker**, who will report on recent research from LASI on oxalic acid sublimation for Varroa treatment. It is hoped that this will include a live demo with a non-noxious substance…

**A past student** from our Beginners’ Course, who will report on their experiences

**A fourth speaker** if time permits.

Full details and directions to the Hall will be given in the January Newsletter.

Marion Cooper

**Beekeeping Refresher Course / Preparation for the BBKA Basic Assessment**

As per last year we will again be running the above course starting end of January/beginning of February (dates to be confirmed).

The course will run for four weeks with an optional fifth week if you require a practical session. The sessions will be approximately two hours.

Based on feedback from last year’s students we will keep strictly to the syllabus for the first part of the sessions and then for the last 15 minutes there will be an optional question and answer clinic for any other items not covered in the syllabus.

The cost of the course will be £40.00 for the four weeks with the optional practical at an extra £10.00 If you wish to go on to do your Basic Assessment there will be an additional payment to the BBKA for this, last year it was £15.00 not sure if it will change for next year.

We will need a minimum of ten students to make the course viable so if this number is not reached the course, unfortunately will not be able to go ahead.

If you are interested in attending the above course please email Tim & Sally Hutchinson on :

info@beehappyproducts.co.uk

Tim and Sally Hutchinson

*It is worth noting that all who have attended these courses in the past have enjoyed them and that all candidates who took the Basic have passed, several with Credit. –Ed.*

**Talk on Asian Hornets – Thursday, February 16th, 7.30pm Cobham Village Hall**

This is a Weybridge Division Winter Meeting, but because of the current interest in the subject, we have invited other Surrey BKA Divisions to join us. More details later.

**Surrey Bee Day Saturday 18th February 9.30am**

The details of this event are now available and a flyer is attached which gives full details.

The lectures will include Botany for Beekeepers; Commercial Bumblebees and Strawberry Pollination;

Flower borders on Farmland - beneficial or hotbed of disease?; Dance Language of Honey bees; Branding Your Product. There will be four lecturers plus talks by three research team members.

**Courses at East Surrey Bees, near Croydon**

A list of some of our courses for the next few months is attached. In addition to the usual beginners and the ever popular Queen Rearing, Mead and Candle making Days we are also offering a Disease work shop on the 3rd of June with a chance to see live combs. It will concentrate not just on recognition of EFB, AFB Sac brood etc. but also what to do if you get one of the ‘nasties’ and maybe more importantly how to avoid getting bee diseases in the first place.

In the meantime if you have any training or teaching needs that you feel we might be able to help with please do not hesitate to contact us.

We hope you have an enjoyable and restful festive season, with time to sit back and enjoy your honey, candles and mead with family and friends.

Celia and David Rudland, East Surrey Bees, [www.eastsurreybees.co.uk](http://www.eastsurreybees.co.uk/) Apiary 0208 6607753

Office 01883 622788 Mobile 07798 915480

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**New Potential Teaching Apiary Site and Education Centre**

At the 2015 AGM it was announced that Weybridge Beekeepers had received a substantial legacy and that this had provided the impetus for WBK to see if we could identify a new permanent teaching apiary, education centre and base for all of our activities.  Currently we have to hire various halls for meetings and the teaching apiary is based at St George’s Junior School in Weybridge and whilst this is an excellent facility we have always been conscious that school requirements could mean we lose the site at any time. In addition there are no meeting facilities at this location.

The committee established a Working Group and I am pleased to be able to advise that we now have a strong potential site.  It is located in Hersham on Elmbridge Council land, very close to the Church Hall where many of our meetings have traditionally been held.   The site encompasses a 120 sqm bungalow which would become the club house, teaching area and also the old back garden that would become the teaching apiary.

The attached PDF presentation outlines more information on the site and our plans.  We would stress at this stage that these are plans only; the committee has made no commitments to take things forward.  The next stage in fact is for Elmbridge Council to grant us formally a ‘Lease in Principle’ on the site based on a business plan we have recently submitted, a copy of which can be obtained if you are interested by writing to davidparker@polymathconsulting.com.

In order that as many Weybridge members can see the site as possible we have organised an open time on Monday 12th December, 3 – 4pm.  The site is down a short unmade road next to 75 Pleasant Place, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames KT12 4HU.  Unfortunately the only times we can access the site currently are in working hours as it requires a council employee to be with us.  We hope that as many of you as possible can make it at this time to see the site in person.

As mentioned in our Chairman’s letter to members, we are starting to look to identify either members or friends of members who may able to assist in what we know will be a big project if it goes ahead.  To that end we are looking for support and help covering all of these areas:

·         Fundraising

·         Architectural/design

·         Specification of fittings and research of equipment/where to buy

·         Project management

·         Trades e.g. builder, plumber, electrician, etc. to oversee those we hire and to check work

·         Information Technology

·         Audio Visual

·         Education Material Design/Writing/Production

If you, or anyone you know may be able to support, then please write to David at davidparker@polymathconsulting.com

*For the benefit of those who may not know David Parker, he is the Working Group Lead and has abundant expertise and enthusiasm.*

**I have swarm, can you help? – October 29th 2016**

That was the phone call I (*David*) received whilst at the National Honey Show attending a workshop on preparing show honey. Slightly taken aback by the call at this time of year, my first question of course was, are you really sure these are honey bees. “Oh yes,” came the answer back, “I am an Environmental Officer, I know what I am looking at.” To my surprise, she told me the bees were found living on a disused building site, in a traffic cone. As to how long they had they been there, she was unsure, but not that long. So, it was not a new swarm, but rather probably a late summer cast. However, living in a traffic cone certainly sounded interesting.

A quick hunt around the National Honey Show - what better place to find a spare beekeeper? Experience told me these kind of collections are easier with a second pair of hands. Shirley, a fellow Weybridge Division Beekeeper, jumped at the opportunity to come with me next morning to sort it out. I was conscious that even if they had not been in the cone that long it could potentially be a very messy job trying to tie all the wild comb into frames.

Next day I was up early making up empty brood frames in my shed – October isn’t usually the time of year I have any to hand. I grabbed a handful of rubber bands and I also needed a nuc box. If the bees were living in a traffic cone I did not expect I would need a full brood box for this collection.

We arrived on site and were eagerly greeted by the lady’s colleague who would escort us whilst on site, he was there that morning to move some snakes prior to the start of the building work. We were taken through the building site and sure enough as you can see in the pictures – (*see link at end of article*) the bees were living very happily in a traffic cone. Luckily the temperature was about 11o Celsius so whilst there were a few bees flying we expected most of them to be home. We promptly set about the task and cut out the three and a bit combs that had been drawn.

It turned out though that we were just in time to save the colony. There were little stores, and only a small area of brood. So without our intervention the colony would almost certainly have died out in the next week or so. The one advantage of this was it meant the job was not very messy as the combs were all dry, no wet sticky stores on our hands.

Then the fun bit, using the cone as a funnel we simply turned it upside down and the remaining bees were funnelled nicely into the nuc box. Given the temperature, we only had to leave it for about 15 minutes and all the flying bees (which had clustered on our heads for warmth!) found their way back to the box and we were able to strap it up and relocate it to one of my apiaries that was only a 15-minute drive away.

Given the very small size of the colony Shirley kindly donated another very small nuc colony and on the Monday we merged the two together using newspaper. I have put fondant on top along with a nice spare frame of stores I had – always useful to keep one or two back I find for colonies in the spring that really need it.

Will they survive? We will have to wait to see. I treat with oxalic acid sublimation in December now, based on the new LASI work, so will be opening up then to have an inspection and remove any brood, so that will give us a good indication of how they are doing, but will keep feeding them through the winter.

We both love collecting swarms and this was a real end of season bonus - a joy to add to our experience and being a help in our community. *See this link for the photos:*

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7dKvxvBNmRLREpOTU8xVlVQSjQ>

David Parker and Shirley Turner

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Beekeepers bridge decades of ethnic divisions**

In Cyprus, the Greek and Turkish areas of the island have been separated by barbed wire and mistrust for decades. According to two Cypriot beekeepers, the Caucasian honey bees which form most of the colonies on the island don’t cope well with the long and scorching Cyprus summer. That is why two beekeepers, one Cypriot and one of Turkish heritage, resolved to breed a Cypriot queen bee to stop relying on imports that die in the heat. Their partnership, which bridges the ethnic and political divide in Cyprus, is flourishing just as the island’s Greek Cypriot President and the leader of the northern Turkish Cypriots carry on reconciliation talks. One of the beekeepers has 750 hives in the north (Turkish) part of the country producing an average of 25 tons of honey a year, while the other beekeeper has 250 hives in the south-east of the island, producing an average of 6 tons per year. The men are ‘unabashedly boastful’ about the quality of their organic honey. “We have the sun, we have the good weather, so if we have the rain, we have the best honey,” one said. So far their indigenous queen-breeding work has produced encouraging results. They have transplanted larvae from the diminishing population of Cypriot bees into a custom-built hive to raise a bigger, hardier bee that they hope will cope better with the climate.

*I think this is a very nice story, that our bees are involved in the encouragement of some co-operation in an unhappy area. It looks as if these two beekeepers are trying to stimulate the population of their own native bee whereas in the past they have relied on imported Caucasians. Is there a message for British beekeepeers here?* *Summarised from an article in the* **i** *newspaper of 8th November.*

**The Zest hive**

This is a new type of hive which claims to be ‘functionally varroa free’ plus having a number of other features. Full details can be found on the web by feeding in the above title. The man behind this hive (Bill Summers) is willing to give a presentation to bee associations; if you would like Weybridge to take advantage of this offer sometime, please let us know.

*Brought to our attention by Jane Hunter – thank you Jane.*

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| **Dates for your diary** |

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| Monday | 12th December | 3.00 – 4.00 pm | Viewing of proposed site for Weybridge Beekeepers | pp.1 and 3-4 |
| Monday | 16th January | 7.30 pm | Beginners’ Course – First session, Hersham | p. 2 |
|  | January/February | Evenings | Beekeeping Refreshers’ Course, Hersham | p. 3 |
| Thursday | 19th January | 7.30 pm | Winter Meeting, Short Talks, Hersham | p. 2 |
| Saturday | \*18th February | All day | 12th Surrey Bee Day, Cobham | p. 3 |
| Thursday  | 16th February | 7.30 pm | Talk on Asian Hornets, Cobham | p. 3 |
| Various days | 10-week Courses and single day Courses from 19th January to 3rd June  | See p. 3 and attached flyer | Courses at East Surrey Bees, near Croydon | See p. 3 and attached flyer |

\*Date given incorrectly as 17th in previous diaries. (Thank you, Sandra, for pointing this out.)

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| Teaching Apiary ManagersTim and Sally Hutchinson - 01932 962094email: olddrone58@gmail.com | SwarmsMichael Main – 01932 849080 email: michaelfmain@hotmail.com  |
| Regional Bee InspectorDiane Steele - 01243 582612 Mobile no. 07775 119452email: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk | Beginners’ Beekeeping CourseAndrew Halstead - 01483 489581email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com  |
| Beekeeping Refresher Course / BBKA BasicTim & Sally Hutchinson**Email:** info@beehappyproducts.co.uk  |  |
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