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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISION NEWSLETTER: February 2017[**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***Editorial***

A significant event for all of us this month will be the talk on the Asian Hornet (see page 2). This should be of great interest and help as it will be given by a beekeeper who spends much of his time with his bees - and the hornets - in France. In case you have not seen it, there is a sobering letter in the January issue of *Beecraft* (page44) from another beekeeper in France in which, among other things, the effects of a sting from an Asian Hornet is decribed. There are many questions which arise in the mind when thinking about the impact on our bees and beekeeping which we can put to the speaker on February 16th; there is nothing better than hearing from someone with first-hand experience of any topic rather than receiving it second-hand.

You will read below of the very significant and exciting progress that has been made regarding the development of the Division’s possible new beekeeping Centre.

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 2**

A lot has happened since the update in the January newsletter.  The full Weybridge Division committee met in January and approved three key actions:

 1. Once all cost implications are clear and approvals obtained, a full EGM of members will be held to vote on the new teaching apiary and clubhouse opportunity before any new financial commitments are made.

 2. We will proceed with applying for the Elmbridge Council Annual Grant (maximum award £3000, deadline for submission January 31st) as a start to our fund-raising activity.  If we receive a grant but do not proceed after any award is granted, the funds can simply be returned to Elmbridge Council.

 3. Assuming the Council grant us a Lease in Principle, we will move forward with applying for planning approval. Any costs for this process will not be taken from WBK core funds but will come from the legacy funds specifically allocated to the new apiary project.

In addition, through the active support of a Weybridge member who is a Building Designer, the initial concept plans for the interior layout first presented at the AGM have been considerably refined and moved forward.  We have benefited from his considerable experience as he is also working on another community clubhouse within Elmbridge Borough.  We are also looking to arrange in the next few weeks an initial pre-planning meeting with Elmbridge Council; this service is available free to us as a charity.

Since submitting the full business plan in early January we have received very positive feedback from Elmbridge Council in terms of the overall quality of the submission; thanks go to everyone involved.  We have received a short initial set of clarification questions from the Council on the business plan and have responded. We are hopeful that further clarifications on timings will be obtained in the next week or so.

As you can see, the project team has been very active and we are moving ahead as per the original time plan presented at the AGM.  Should you have any questions or can offer support in any area please do get in touch. Thank you.

David Parker (davidparker@polymathconsulting.com)

**REMINDERS AND NOTICE OF NEW ITEMS**

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

Details were given in the January issue and a flyer is attached to this newsletter as a reminder. Given the importance of the subject of this talk, we have invited all other SBKA Divisions to join us, so please come for yourselves and to welcome the other Surrey Beekeepers.

Also at this meeting we shall have the opportunity of meeting our new Seasonal Inspector, Hilary Howard. She will briefly introduce herself and explain the personnel changes that affect our area.

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

A flyer (unknown.jpg) giving full details was given in the January issue; another is attached as a reminder.

**Central Association of Bee-Keepers (CABK) Spring meeting, 18th February**

This annual meeting will be at Roots at Shoots (near Waterloo).

The speakers are:

Dr Hauke Koch (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), Dr Emily Bailes (Royal Holloway, Univ. of London), Jonathan Patrick (Cambridge University). Full details of topics, times, lunch arrangements, etc. are on the attached flyer.

*Unfortuntely the date of this meeting clashes with our own Surrey Bee Day.*

**A Quiz**

Farnham BKA are holding a quiz at Tilford Institute on Saturday 25th Feb 2017. Details in January issue.

**REPORTS**

**Winter Meeting, Thursday January 19th, 7.30pm**

***Editor’s note:*** *The following is a summary of a very interesting and detailed report of the meeting, written by Jane Deane. Whether or not you were able to attend the meeting, we strongly suggest that you read her full report which is provided as an attachment.*

This meeting, attended by about 30 members, was addressed on various topics by three of our own members separately, and by three members together - the Cownley family. First we heard from Edwina Wardle, our recently appointed Education Officer, who outlined several forthcoming events of an educational nature arranged by us or other associations. She invited us to contact her for any more information and read the newsletters for further details of events.

Then Paul, Kate and Aiden Cownley gave us a brief account of their history as new beekeepers. It began when Paul told of his curiosity about beekeeping. This led to them attending an apiary meeting at Garsons Farm; then the three of them did the beginners’ course run by our Division. Their first colony was a swarm that was given to them by Michael Main. The whole family are really engaged in their fascinating new hobby and they now run 8 colonies and have experience in most aspects of beekeeping.

David Parker then gave us a presentation and demonstration on the use of Oxalic Acid Sublimation for the control of Varroa. David has looked in depth at the LASI research into the subject, and has followed this up with some investigations of his own. He gave a brief summary of these various inputs to his conclusions regarding various aspects of the matter, the best times of year to treat, emphasising the desirability of the colony being treated to be broodless (especially sealed), a description of the apparatus required, and finally a demonstration using crystallised sugar rather than oxalic acid powder (for reasons of safety – interesting that sugar ‘sublimates’) in the sublimation apparatus.

The final talk was given by Richard Emmett and was about beekeeping in Africa. Many families in Africa are on the poverty line and so Richard has been helping them to increase thair incomes by showing them how to become beekeepers. The weather is hot so the bees produce honey for 365 days a year giving 4 harvests a year which can earn a beekeeper about £10 000 per annum. Richard teaches the Africans to make the top-bar hive which is much better than their traditional log hives as they can be managed without destroying the nest when harvesting honey. The hives are either suspended from trees by cables, or stood on a metal stand on the ground. With either method the cables or stands have to be coated with thick grease to prevent driver ants from entering the hives. The honey is separated from the comb by the sun, then filtered through mosquito net. The honey is highly valued so as well as selling it locally, traders come from the local towns to purchase it. An interesting difference between the beekeeping that we practice is that the African beekeepers welcome swarms from their hives as they see it as an easy way of increasing their number of colonies and hence their honey harvest.

There was good audience participation in the meeting (in the form of questions and comments) - always a sign that a meeting is much enjoyed.

It is most encouraging to remember that all of the speakers at this meeting (as well as the writer of this report) were students at the Division’s beginners’ beekeeping courses.

**An invitation to support the work in Africa described in the above report**

*Editor’s note: Having enjoyed and admired the work described by Richard in Africa, I suggested to him that it would be nice to ask our members if they would like to support the work either by going to Africa to help with practical beekeeping, or with financial support. He sent the following reply:*

Thanks to everyone for the warm response to my sharing of Malawian and Ghanaian beekeeping practices and my experiences there. Anyone interested in joining me on a trip to those beautiful but impoverished countries would be very welcome. You have more to offer than you might think!

The organisation I travel with is a small development agency based on the south coast: Links International.

Details of the charities’ up and coming trips, and volunteer application forms can be accessed via their website:

 <http://linksinternational.org.uk/category/get-involved/trips/>

 or please email me with any questions you might have:

  richardaemmett@aol.com

Beekeeping is a wonderful absorbing pastime and business for some here, but in Africa beekeeping can make a real difference to people’s lives with the income it brings without adding to their daily burden of life. Thanks !

Andy Read, the CEO of the small development charity "Links International", that I go on trips to Africa with, is delighted (as I am) for your invitation to WBKA members to volunteer for a trip, or indeed to support the work financially. For members to donate they can go to the Links International website and "Project Giving"

  [*http://linksinternational.org.uk/category/get-involved/give/project-funding/*](http://linksinternational.org.uk/category/get-involved/give/project-funding/)

This gives the details of where and how to donate and use the reference *"****Malawi*** Beekeeping***"***

Richard Emmett

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Beekeeping Course at Wisborough Green, West Susssex, Saturday 11th March**

This is a comprehensive course run over one day by West Sussex BKA. It would be suitable as a revision course for recently started beekeepers, as a back-up course for current beginners after completing the course that is running in Hersham, or simply for those who would like to polish up or supplement their beekeeping skills. For full details see the attachment.

**A talk on bee diseases, recognition and treatment, Monday 6th March, 7.30 pm**

I have booked David Rudland of East Surrey Bees (our previous area Bee Inspector) to do the bee disease portion of the beginners’ theory course.  He will be coming in week 8 of the course, on 6th March.  As in previous years we are making that session available to all members of the Division to give them the opportunity to brush up their disease knowledge.  This meeting will take place in the Hersham Community Trust Hall, Burhill Road KT12 4BJ. The Hall (recently refurbished) is the last building on the left in the straight section of Burhill Road, entered from beside St Peter’s Church in Burwood Road, Hersham. You will pass Back Green on the left, then a house or two, then a plant nursery, Woodlark Nurseries, and the Hall is the next building on the left. There is plenty of parking – outside the Hall, in the road and in the car park of Piglets Children’s Nursery opposite.

Andrew Halstead

**Reigate Division Auction - of Bees and BeeKeeping Equipment, 25th March**

Auction to be held on Saturday the 25th March 2017 at Mickleham Village Hall. A flyer is attached. Full details and links to Terms & Conditions and to Sellers’ Forms are on our website: [www.reigatebeekeepers.org.uk](http://reigatebeekeepers.org.uk/)

**Epsom Division Division Sale Day, Saturday 25th March**

The sale will be held at the Epsom Apiary, Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell. A detailed list of the items available is given on the attachment.

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Surrey Beekeepers Association (SBKA) news**

The latest meeting of the Surrey Beekeers Association was on Thursday 5th January. The main topic was the forthcoming BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) and how Surrey would vote.  Most of the motions being put forward to the ADM concerned BBKA organisation and operational matters. There were a couple of county associations that appear to want to split, with each “division” wishing to become an area association in its own right. Generally we opposed such moves on the grounds that the new Associations would be small (less than 100 members compared to Surrey at circa 1000 members) and this would increase the administration cost for the BBKA.

As usual, the more interesting stuff was in the less formal discussions towards the end.

Reigate have attended a number of pop up shops to sell their honey and plan to do more during 2017.

Derek, from Kingston, described a recent divisional talk about beekeeping during the 2016 season which he said was a fascinating talk - "like a breath of fresh air".  This was very well received by their members, and delivered by none other than our own Rob and Chris Chisholm.

Epsom are making increased use of social media.  Their view is that you need to decide early on whether this is for your own members or the local public who are interested in purchasing honey and supporting bees locally. Incidentally we do have a Weybridge Beekeepers’ facebook page, though it isn’t used much. Is anyone interested in taking on a role of representing us through social media? Please contact me if you are.

Martin Major martin@tectoday.com

*A note on the Surrey Beekeepers’ Association and a report of their last Council Meeting. Our thanks to Martin Major for supplying this.*

Weybridge Beekeepers are one of eight divisions which make up the SBKA and as a member of Weybridge, you are automatically a member of the SBKA. Each division is represented on the SBKA by a Trustee and a Council Member. Our Trustee is Marion Cooper and Council Member is Martin Major. The SBKA represents us at the BBKA and organises events at the county level such as the Surrey Bee Day, education, training and the Honey Show at the Surrey County show. The Council meets quarterly.

**From our foreign correspondent**

Hello from summer in NZ! I thought you might like to know that whilst out walking the dog we are looking after, I met an  old  man who has 2 hives on his 12-acre garden plot.  (I'd spotted the hives earlier, so was keen to talk to him).  Got talking bees as you do, and found that he used to be a bee farmer in the south when he was very young, but then went into military service in WWII; he lives with his son now, who runs the hives. The beekeepers themselves don't requeen their colonies, they think they need hundreds of hives to get a good queen, but buy queens at $84 (£49) - he was outraged at the cost. The queens last 3 years. They start harvesting the honey in November all the way through to March. He said the bees were coping with Varroa,  but the biggest problem was AFB. Unfortunately, I couldn't get anything else out of him as he was far more interested in showing me his lily collection. It turned out this man was 100 years old, so there is hope for us all yet!

Attached are 3 photos (jpg images) of honey from 'The Shire, Middle earth’! I found  their packaging description interesting and a 500g jar was $36 (£21)!!!

Anne Miller

*Thank you, Anne – lovely pictures. –Ed.*

**Personal experience of inspecting colonies for broodless periods, 2016/2017**

Further to the article I wrote on the LASI research on when best to treat with oxalic acid, I have been doing my own practical treatments/research over this December and January. My apiaries are around the Woking/Horsell area and thus things may differ for other people. The bees are a mixture of 2 x LASI Queens (one LASI mated, one locally mated), swarm queens, and my own bred mongrel queens.

I started by inspecting colonies at one apiary in mid-December; all seven colonies inspected had no sealed brood (this included those with the two LASI Queens). Due to technical equipment failures I was unable to treat at that time.

My next inspection was between January 1-5, when 14 colonies were inspected, including the seven from the original site. Of the seven in the original apiary two had brood, and in total 6 out of 14 colonies had brood, thus 42% of colonies had brood by the first week of January as opposed to 0% in mid-December.

On the 24th January, after the cold spell we experienced, I treated a further six colonies in East Horsley. Of these, 4 had small patches of brood, circa a fist size on two sides of a frame, one had a lot more and one had none. Thus showing that at this point only 16% of the hives were broodless.

In their research (diagram below) LASI found that 100% of colonies in January had brood. Given that 42% of my colonies had brood by the end of the first week, and combining those inspected at the beginning of January and on the 24th you end up with 55% with brood whereas 0% had brood in mid-December. This would seem to align with the LASI findings, at least in the Woking and East Horsley areas, and the conclusion that mid-December, not January, is the best time to treat if you are carrying out oxalic acid treatments and looking for a broodless period. I believe beekeepers should thus seriously consider this for next year.

I am keen, though, to hear from any other beekeepers who have inspected hives this year to add to this data.

University of Sussex, LASI Research on colonies with brood in December (D) and January (J) in 2012-15:

 David Parker

*Note from Geoff Cooper: When I treated for Varroa (oxalic acid sublimation) I checked 4 of my own colonies for the presence of brood (2 on 23rd December, and 2 on 31st December, in each of 2 apiaries); none had brood in them – I did not look into any others. Note that I would not recommend new beekeepers to lift frames in the winter; you have to work very quickly for minimum disturbance and chilling.*

**SE Regional Annual Report from the National Bee Unit**

Malcolm Clarke (Guildford Division) suggests that all members should read this. The report is a most interesting and informative document, not just about where EFB, for example, was found in our area, but also about the Asian hornet finding.

The complete report is attached.

**Apiary sites available**

*We have received the following note from County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames. If this is of interest to you, please contact the Council directly. It would be interesting to hear of any outcomes.*

I work for Surrey County Council and would like to enquire if you, or people you know, would be interested in renting land in Surrey to set up and manage beehives.

Being aware of the falling bee population and the need to make productive use of small plots of Surrey County Council owned land I am approaching interested parties to see if there is potential for an arrangement.

Such an agreement would be in the form of a ‘garden’ licence to use land owned by Surrey for a small fixed yearly fee (normally £75) and set up charge (same) . The licence holder would be responsible for managing and the supplying beehives.

 I would just like to gauge if there is any demand for such a venture – please do get back to me if you think this is something which we can work on together.

With kind regards,

*Nick Hickman | Service Facilities Manager - BSc. CBIFM, AIFSM, AIFireE Property Services | Orbis , R407, 404 & G49,  County Hall, Penrhyn Rd, Kingston KT1 2DW Mob. 07968 833378. Office. 020 8541 98595* *GCSX Email:-* *nick.hickman@surreycc.gcsx.gov.uk**(Restricted or Protected use only)*

**New book: Wonderful Weeds. An extensive & fully illustrated guide from seedlings to fruit.**

Peter Webb has sent the following:

‘Recently I’ve gained a copy of a book which may well be of interest to other beekeepers.

**Wonderful Weeds**.  The author is Madeline Harley, formerly head of pollen research at Kew. As well as a comprehensively illustrated (in colour) guide to the many types of weeds, there is information on pollen, hence how the plant is fertilised. Plus a full introduction and useful glossary, appendices and toxicity of the plants.

ISBN: 978 1 906506 60 5

Available at discounted prices from <https://wordery.com/> + <https://www.bookdepository.com/>’

Peter kindly lent me this book and I share his enthusiasm for it. Madeline Harley has written a number of beautifully illustrated books on pollen that appear in beekeeping book lists, so her name may be familiar.

In her discussion of the word ‘weed’, she makes the point that these plants are always defined in relation to people (humans), who consider them a nuisance – or worse – rather than considered in their own right as wild plants. The reasons are obvious, but this book, devoted to the characteristics of these plants, gives a balanced view, with information being given for each under the headings: Pollination; Regeneration strategy; Weed control; Herbal, Culinary and Folklore, and an extra section on Toxicity, where appropriate. Over 200 species of flowering plants, grasses and ferns are covered in detail. During a quick flick through the pages, it is soon obvious how very many of these wild plants are visited by bees for nectar and/or pollen – a good biodiversity point to make when highlighting the value of bees in the environment.

Marion Cooper - with thanks to Peter Webb

**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.

**Beekeeping Equipment**

Gil Bray, one of our members, has sadly had to cease beekeeping, although he retains his interest and will continue to support us. However, he has decided to sell all of his equipment; none of it is more than a few years old. Full details are shown on the attachment.

Contact Gil by phone, mobile 07733 323938, or email: gil@braysmail.com

**Bees for sale**

**A number of ESTABLISHED OVERWINTERED COLONIES with 2016 Queen  (National Standard brood frames)**The colonies were treated for Varroa late summer/autumn 2016, have a gentle temperament and are good foragers. All queens are locally reared from our gentle breeding stock.

Price of each colony: £175 (excluding hive) These colonies are available in early spring as soon as the weather allows. For more information, please contact me – details below.

**NUCS (available to pre-order now – see** Special Offer **below) - (We do not overwinter nucs) - 6 Frame Nucs** (National standard frames) with 2017 mated queen (marked yellow). Supplied in 6 frame Poly Nuc. £150 + £30 nuc deposit which is refundable on return. **- 5 Frame Nucs** (National standard frames) with 2017 mated queen (marked yellow). Supplied in 5 frame Correx Travelling Box. Price: £155. The nucs will have a mated 2017 Queen, locally reared from our gentle breeding stock, together with a combination of her brood in various stages and stores. These nucs will be available from mid June onwards depending on the weather.

**Special Offer**: We offer a £5 discount for nuc orders received by 30th April. A deposit of £30 will be required.

**Contact: Astrid Bowers-Veenman** (Hog's Back Bees and Bee Products)

Location: Ash Green (between Guildford and Farnham, just off the A31)

Distance from Weybridge: 12 miles (as the crow flies)

**[Tel.No](http://tel.no/).: 01252 330229 / Mobile: 07803 069798 / Email:** **astrid@coginternational.co.uk**

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

**LASI Queens from the University of Sussex**

Beekeepers are pre-ordering their mated queens for 2017 and we are working hard to make sure we can support UK beekeepers. If you want to beat the rush and are interested in pre-ordering a hygienic bee from LASI, [please visit our website.](http://sinc.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3c2d157b0361b201478268230&id=cc5f7eb02f&e=3d2de848e1) Refer to attachment.

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Thursday  | 16th February | 7.30 pm | Winter MeetingTalk on Asian Hornets, Cobham | p. 2 and flyer |
| Saturday | 18th February | All day | 12th Surrey Bee Day, Cobham | p. 2 and flyer |
| Saturday | 18th February | All day | CABK Spring Meeting, London | p. 2 and flyer |
| Saturday | 11th March | 9.00 am -5.00 pm | One day beekeeping course, Wisborough Green, W. Sussex | p. 3 and flyer |
| Various days | 10-week Courses and single day Courses from 19th January to 3rd June  | See Nov. p. 3 and attached flyer | Courses at East Surrey Bees, near Croydon | See Nov. p. 3 and flyer |

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