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

***Editorial***

With our understandable preoccupation with Varroa, it has been suggested that we are losing sight of other serious problems, the principle one of these at the moment being Nosema. It is very much with us and on the increase and is very damaging to the bees. I checked my own colonies in the last few days: 4 were heavily affected, 2 had medium infestation, and 4 were light, but, to my great surprise, we could find no spores at all in the samples from the other 4 colonies. Many years ago, my beekeeping teacher warned us not to use Fumidil B as a routine treatment: “It is all we have. If by overuse we make Nosema resistant to this, there is nothing else”. So here we are 30 years later, remarkably with no resistance reported, but with our only treatment taken away and no replacement, despite (I suspect questionable) claims for various new products that have appeared meanwhile. “The Shook Swarm” has been claimed by many reputable and experienced beekeepers to be a very effective method of controlling Nosema (as well as Varroa). Probably due to my Luddite tendencies, I have always been suspicious of the method because of the serious disruption and loss of sealed brood that it necessitates. However, I decided to try it this season and asked Rob Chisholm to write an article for the Newsletter on the subject. His article does not describe how to carry out a shook swarm; plenty has been written on this already (see, for example, the Fact Sheet on this on the BeeBase website), but rather he deals with the advantages and implications and his own observations over 5 years of its practice. I had no idea that he has been shook swarming his colonies for 5 years with the results that you can read about on page 5. I have started on some of my colonies and look forward to the results.

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 4**

Progress continues to be made with Elmbridge Council around the Heads of Terms with an expectation that agreement on these will now be reached in early April.  The project would then go to a meeting of several Cabinet Members for final approval.  We will also hear back from planning in the second week of April and will have a better understanding of how that aspect of the project can be taken forward and on what basis.  Once we have the approval from the Council, and feedback from planning the real work will begin in terms of creating further detailed plans so that these can then costed prior to the EGM.  This will then allow us to present to the full Weybridge membership the detailed plans and costs for the project before any major non-budgeted expenditure is incurred.  Given the above timings it is likely that the EGM will be towards the end of May or early in June this year.

David Parker

**REMINDERS AND NOTICE OF NEW ITEMS**

**Meeting to be held in Michael Main’s garden at 2.30 pm on Saturday 8th April**

This is our first Garden meeting of the year, and will be held at:

Hill House, Northfield Place, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0RF.

Michael has provided directions and details, as follows:

If coming from Weybridge direction, drive past the station heading south along Brooklands Road, pass Caenshill Road on the right at the top of the hill and continue along Brooklands Road approx. 100 yds and take the next turn on the left (opposite a letterbox on the RHS of the road), that is Northfield Place. If coming from Woking / Byfleet, head towards Cobham on the A245, but turn left towards Weybridge at the roundabout into Brooklands Road. After another roundabout, look out for the letterbox, which will be on the LHS, and turn right there into Northfield Place. Proceed down the hill past one road on the left and another, Crossfield Place, on the right.  The house is the second on the RHS after Crossfield Place (white house with green tile roof).  Please park considerately to the neighbours with as many cars as possible on my drive (we should get 6-7 cars if parked close).

The main theme of this meeting will be comb change, advocated for many reasons. Michael will show the colonies he shook warmed in March, and will also demonstrate a so-called Bailey comb change.

Following the meeting we will be having a picnic tea.  Hot water, tea, coffee and milk will be provided.  Please bring your own mugs and something to share for the picnic.

Michael (michaelfmain@hotmail.com)

**Nosema clinic**

We shall be holding our usual Clinic again this year. The most likely date is Tuesday, 2nd May, but it has not been possible to confirm the details in time for this Newsletter, so look out for an email with Nosema Clinic as the Subject. Samples of at least 30 bees can be collected at any time now, and stored in the freezer until required. Details of how to collect and prepare the samples are given in an attachment.

**The amazing honey bee: design and function: Lecture by Professor Jamie Ellis, 4th April in Petworth**

Details on page 3.

**BBKA Convention, 7, 8, 9 April, Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire**

Details on page 26 of the April issue of BeeCraft.

**Bee Market and Auction, 22nd April, Brinsbury near Pulborough, West Sussex**

Details on page 3.

**Meon Valley Beekeepers Auction, Saturday 6th May**

Details in March Newsletter, page 4.

**Surrey County Show, 29th May**

Details in March Newsletter page 2 and attachment.

**South of England Show, Ardingly in Sussex  on  8, 9, 10 June**

Details in March Newsletter, page 5.

**REPORTS**

**Winter Meeting, March 6th, Community Trust Hall, Hersham**

**A talk on Bee Diseases, recognition and treatment**

This was a session of our Beekeepers Beginners’ Course to which all other members were invited. It was given by David Rudland of East Surrey Bees. About 40 people attended, of whom about 25 were visitors.

David dealt with the usual run of bacterial and viral diseases and parasites which beekeepers have to recognise, for their treatments and management systems control. To help to do this he emphasised the need to recognise what a sound, healthy colony looks like, thus providing the background for noticing signs of problems automatically. Although the content of his talk was very familiar to experienced beekeepeers (perhaps not to some people with bees over several years), it was probably new (and overwhelming?) to most of the students on the course. David must have given this talk many times, yet he made it fresh and interesting; and there was something for every member in his audience. Just as at school, new information, then revision of the details are of such importance to all beekeepers. Geoff Cooper

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Timetable of Weybridge Summer Meetings**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hosts** | **Date** | **Status** | **Main Subject** | **Secondary Subject** |
| Michael Main | April 8th | Confirmed | Shook Swarm one month on   |  Bailey Comb Change |
| David Parker | May 21st | Confirmed | Queen Cell Harvesting  and Queen Rearing | Making up Mini Nucs - demonstration |
| Peter Bowbrick(at Garson Farm) | June 17th | Confirmed | Disease Inspection | How to Find, Mark and Clip a Queen |
| Paul and Helen Bunclark | July 22nd | Confirmed | Will depend on the colonies at the time | Varroa Monitoring, various methods |
| Chris Burnett  | August | Confirmed in principle, final date to be agreed | Demonstration of Top Bar Hives | Making an Asian Hornet trap  from a 2 Litre Pop bottle  |
|   | September |  TBC | End of Season Social | Location TBC |

*Our thanks to David Parker for arranging this season’s meetings.*

**Professor Jamie Ellis lecture 4th April in Petworth. 'The amazing honey bee: design and function'.**

Jamie Ellis is the Gahan Associate Professor of Entomology in the Department of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida, USA.  He has a BS degree in Biology from the University of Georgia and a PhD in Entomology from Rhodes University in South Africa.  At the University of Florida, Jamie has responsibilities in extension, instruction and research.  Regarding his extension work, Jamie created the AFBEE program (African Bee Extension and Education Program), the UF, South Florida, and Caribbean Bee Colleges, and the UF Master Beekeeper Program. As an instructor, Jamie supervises PhD and masters students in addition to offering an online beekeeping course. Currently, Jamie and his team have over 30 active research projects in the fields of honey bee husbandry, conservation and ecology, and integrated crop pollination.  Jamie is also a trustee of the International Bee Research Association. The evening lecture will start at 7:30pm sharp so please be in your seats no later than 7:20pm.  All welcome and entry to non-WSBKA members is just £5.  The venue is the Leconfield Hall, Market Square, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0AH .

Graham E secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

*I would urge as many as possible to go and listen to this very special speaker with his very special subject. It’s a long way to go (about 30 miles) but you won’t regret making the effort. Jamie Ellis is one of the main speakers at the forthcoming BBKA Convention (7-9 April). – Ed.*

**Bee Market and Auction, 22nd April, Brinsbury near Pulborough, West Sussex**

The West Sussex Beekeepers’ Association is again organising a Bee Market and Auction for the benefit of its members and non-members with beekeepers attending to buy and sell from a very wide area. The event will again take place at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough, West Sussex on **Saturday 22nd April 2017**.  Auction details, Guidance Notes and the Entry Form are available to download from the WSBKA website - [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html).  If any Association would like hard copies of the Guidance Notes and/or Entry Form please let me know.  The Auction catalogue will be published online after 19th April. For further details contact me on phone 01403 752493,

Mobile 07761 349281or email secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

  Graham E

**Surrey County Show, Guildford, 29th May**

Details in March Newsletter, page 2 and attachment.

Michael Main (Chief Steward) reports that he now has enough Stewards.

**South of England Show, Ardingly in Sussex  on  8, 9, 10 June**

Details in March Newsletter, page 5.

**National Honey Show, Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th October 2017**

For the second year running, the Show will be held at Sandown Park, Esher. The main lecture programme for this year includes lectures by Tom Seeley, Heather Mattila, Kim Flottum, Will Steynor and Peter Tomkins. There will be the usual series of Bee Craft Lectures on the Friday. On Saturday there will be a special focus on the early years of beekeeping to help those starting out think about what to do next. The topics have been carefully chosen as being relevant to those new to the craft, with many of the things covered that beginners are often confronted with in their early years. The workshop programme includes– new for 2017 – “Setting up a Bee Breeding Group”, “Labour Saving Devices” and “Making Wax Models”. National Honey Show Members will be able to book workshop places via our website from 1st September. The link to the 2017 leaflet is on our website at: <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/files/2017/nhs-leaflet-2017.pdf>. Leaflets for this year’s Show will be available to collect from the Thorne's stand at Bee Tradex, and at The BBKA Spring Convention.

If you’d prefer leaflets to be posted to you, please email Val: publicity@honeyshow.co.uk at Sandown Park Race Course, Esher, Surrey.

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Would you like a swarm?**

I am setting up a list of members wanting swarms during the coming months.

As of today no one is on the list.  If you want a swarm please send me the following details:-

Your name, an email address, a daytime telephone no and an evening number or a mobile no.  If you are prepared to collect the swarm yourself please say whether you can do so during working hours.

There is no guarantee that you will get a swarm as they will be distributed on a first come basis (although I do prioritise new beekeepers on our Beginners’ Course).  If you are unable to take one when offered, your name will move to the bottom of the list.  I will not be around for most of May, so June is likely the earliest swarms will be available.  However, whilst I am away I will distribute your names to other swarm collectors in our division in case they have surplus swarms.  Providing your details indicates that you agree to this use of your data.

If any other members collect a swarm that you do not want, please contact me and I will let you know who is next on the list.

 Michael Main (michaelfmain@hotmail.com)

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Urgent message from the BBKA**

Following the resignation of our Treasurer Chris Lake announced at the January ADM due to pressure of his commercial work, the BBKA wishes to appoint a replacement Honorary Treasurer.  We are looking for a suitably qualified and experienced finance person who is willing to support the development of the financial function of the BBKA.  A job description is attached.

We would be extremely grateful if you could sound out your members to establish whether there are suitable applicants within your Association who might be persuaded to join the team.

If suitable candidates are available, we will organise an interview with members of the Executive Committee to make the initial appointment : such appointment will be ratified at the next ADM as required by the BBKA constitution in a totally transparent and open process.

Applications of interest with a short CV should be e-mailed in the first instance please to Leigh Sidaway at leighs@britishbeekeepers.com.

There is no remuneration for this honorary role, but reasonable expenses incurred in fulfillment of the job function will be reimbursed by the BBKA.

For further information on what might be involved please contact me on howard.pool@bbka.org.uk.

Many thanks.

Howard Pool – Chair of Finance

**Nosema and Shook Swarming**

It has been requested that I write an article on the above as it would appear that beekeepers have and are obsessed, rightly so, with the various problems associated with Varroa, and have taken their “eye off the ball” with regard to Nosema. I believe Nosema presents a really significant threat to our bees and should be treated as such.

Traditionally, testing for Nosema infection was carried out in the late summer, now a waste of time, for the reasons outlined in the article I wrote several years ago.

Nosema testing should be carried out in the spring, and the Division will run a clinic in the near future so that beekeepers can be sure that their bees are in good shape for the season.

Prior to the use of Fumidil-B being prohibited both in Europe and the UK the accepted practice for the treatment of Nosema was to test the colony in late summer and, if found, incorporate Fumidil-B into the autumn feed. Incidentally Fumidil-B was never a cure, it did however keep the infection under control until the spring when the bees could be transferred onto clean comb and complete the treatment. However, unfortunately like many bee medications, Fumidil-B was frequently misused by lazy beekeepers; rather than testing first they used it as a prophylactic. This practice probably caused traces of it to appear in honey and thus be withdrawn. Following the loss of Fumidil-B to beekeepers, numerous other products have appeared on the market purporting to treat Nosema, but as they are really only dietary supplements, in my opinion, none of them are effective replacements.

From the foregoing it became apparent to me that a different approach was needed. Not only was *Nosema apis* affecting the bees, but possibly a new infection *Nosema ceranae* was even more potentially damaging. I therefore decided to go back to first principals and consider what was known about Nosema:-

1. The infection is carried in the bees’ gut and proliferates on old soiled comb, particularly during the winter when the bees cannot get out to defecate.
2. The infection will naturally lessen when the flying bees defecate away from the hive.
3. Nosema infection reduces the life span of a worker bee by about 50%, therefore winter bees will last 3 months and summer bees only 3 weeks. This will seriously affect spring build up, potential honey crop and could easily lead to the demise of the colony.

Considering these facts, it became apparent that somewhat drastic spring and later colony management would be required to combat this infection. In the spring, neither replacing a few old combs or indeed even a “Bailey Comb Change” was likely to provide a consistent outcome. After all, unless all the old comb is replaced, the bees are still tending brood and feeding on that comb and potentially spreading the infection. I therefore concluded that “Shook Swarming” should become part of my normal spring management programme; this way I would not only combat Nosema but also rid the colony of about 98% of inherent

Varroa Mites. Finally, after extracting the honey at the end of the season, any combs that have previously contained brood and have been manipulated into the supers are destroyed.

Using this programme for the last five years I can honestly say the incidence of Nosema infection has at best been non-existent, at worst very low and the colonies generally extremely productive, “healthy bees gather more honey”.

Over the last several years I have slightly modified my spring “Shook Swarming” technique. Instead of destroying all the brood comb, I leave one frame of open brood in the hive for a further week or so to pick up any remaining Varroa mites adhering to the bees; they will be desperate to get into that brood to continue their reproductive cycle. When that comb is then destroyed you can be sure that you have very likely removed most of the Varroa mites from the colony.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, many beekeepers still seem reluctant to “shook swarm” their bees and all too frequently I hear the comment, “ what about destroying all that brood?”. Unfortunately this must be considered as “collateral damage”; you are benefitting the majority for the sake of some casualties. Never be tempted to “save the brood” by moving the sealed brood with its nurse bees to another hive, as the result is likely to be a “shook swarm” with insufficient bees for it to expand rapidly and some brood likely to have a high Varroa load and probably Nosema too. Rob Chisholm – March 2017

*Thank you, Rob, for this helpful and clarifying article. –Ed.*

**Life of a bee in one minute – egg to adult**

Here is a link to a talk about bees - but in the middle is a 60-second clip showing the first 21 days of a bees’ life - amazing photography.

<http://www.ted.com/talks/anand_varma_a_thrilling_look_at_the_first_21_days_of_a_bee_s_life>

Martin Major

*Thank you for this remarkable clip, Martin. It is also very interesting to find how a photographer became an enthusiastic beekeeper as a result of one of his work assignments.*

*This video clip has been mentioned in a previous Newsletter (June 2015), when Bill Riddiford sent it from another source, but it is well worth a second viewing, and definitely a first.*

**Propolis for health**

The following gives details of claims that propolis is of help for number of health disorders:

<https://draxe.com/bee-propolis/>

David Parker

**An extraordinary colony**

I have mentioned this colony in a past newsletter, and I think some of it may have been included previously, by my accident. It might now be of interest give its full, updated 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. (At this stage there did not seem to be much hope for the outcome of progeny of this purchased queen)

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 (11 frame) 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)

August 2016 122 lb honey extracted !!

11/3/2017 first inspection: thriving. Same queen present

1/4/2017 shook swarmed

Having set this history down in print, the growth of the colony does 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 in 2015, I decided to let the colony carry on and overwinter 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 up trumps (perhaps THAT one of yours will as well!).

Please send in your experiences of useless queens and colonies that have finally thrived.

Geoff Cooper

**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.

**Local bees for sale**

Available from late April - May, overwintered 6-frame nucs and 12-frame colonies of British-bred Buckfast bees with brood in all stages and headed by marked, 2016 Buckfast queens from Jed Marshall. The bees are strong, healthy, gentle and hardworking; they are on clean combs and have been treated for Varroa. Currently housed in Payne’s poly nuc boxes, but if preferred can be transferred to your own hive.

Nucs from £150, Colonies from £200. Cash on collection, please.

Call Arran (Weybridge member) on 07713 629189.

**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 for overwintered colonies from £175. 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.

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Tuesday | 4th April | 7.30 pm | Professor Jamie Ellis Lecture,Petworth | p. 3 |
| Saturday | 8th April | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Michael Main | pp. 1-2 |
| Saturday | 22nd April |  | Auction, West Sussex Beekeepers, Pulborough | p. 3 |
| Tuesday | 2nd May | 7.30 pm | Nosema Clinic | p. 2. To be confirmed |
| Saturday | 6th May | From 12 noon | Auction, Meon Valley Beekeepers | p. 5, March |
| Sunday | 21st May | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, David Parker | Details later |
| Monday | 29th May | All day | Surrey County Show, Guildford | p. 3 and pp. 2, 5 and attachment, March |
| Thursday-Saturday | 8th-10th June | All day | South of England Show, Ardingly | p. 5, March |
| Saturday | 17th June | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Peter Bowbrick | Details later |
| Saturday | July 22nd | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Paul and Helen Bunclark | Details later |
| Thursday-Saturday  | 26th to 28th October |  | National Honey Show | p. 4 |
| 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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| CONTACT DETAILS |
| ChairmanAndrew Halstead - 01483 489581email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com | SecretaryJane Hunter - 01932 857427email: weybridgebees.sec@gmail.com |
| TreasurerMichael Main - 01932 849080email: michaelfmain@hotmail.com | Newsletter EditorGeoff Cooper - 01932 242179email: coopergm56@btinternet.com |
| Rowtown Apiary ManagerRob Chisholm - 01483 715779email: robinchisholm102@btinternet.com | Burhill Allotments Apiary ManagerEdwina Wardle – 01932 702887 email: Wardle\_1@ntlworld.com |
| 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 Hutchinsonemail: info@beehappyproducts.co.uk  | Membership SecretaryPeter Webbemail: peterwebb@btinternet.com  |
| Education CoordinatorEdwina Wardle – 01932 702887 email: Wardle\_1@ntlworld.com |  |
| LOCAL BEE ADVISORS |
| Rob Chisholm - 01483 715779 | Geoff Cooper - 01932 242179 |
| Paul Hildersley – 07827 916186 |  |