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| logoSURREY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATIONWEYBRIDGE DIVISIONNEWSLETTER: May 2017 [**www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com**](http://www.weybridgebeekeepers.weebly.com/) |

***Editorial***

A few warm weeks earlier in April when the bees were collecting nectar have been followed by colder weather and several members report that the nectar flow has ceased. I suspect that the lack of rain has contributed to the halt in flow. The total rainfall in Hersham in April was only 4mm, a remarkably low figure for any month. All of this means, of course, that we must continue to ensure that our bees do not run short of stores, and feed if necessary. Another aspect of lack of water and bees came with a telephone call from a man who was concerned that about 30 bees were lining up on his dog’s drinking bowl. He did not want to disturb the bees but was a bit concerned for his dog, and was seeking some advice. Having explained what the bees were doing, I did not want to suggest that the bowl be moved to another place and hence deprive the bees of their water, but the caller came up with his own perfect solution, a frontiers of technology one to boot: provide his dog with another drinker. I was so bowled over by this obvious but ingenious solution that I did not think to tell him to place it well away from the original. Another story came from a beekeeper whose bees were alarming neighbours by taking water from their garden taps. He wondered what he (the beekeeper) should do. . . . . We are all living in some pretty tough times.

Since writing the above I have had the following information from David Parker, with a chart (of hive weight, indicating nectar flow) from his Arnia monitoring system hive that is relevant to the above.  “It is so clear in that you can see in early April a bit of a flow on for a week or just over, and now with no nectar they are eating some of the stores they put on”. The chart is included as an attachment (unknown.png).

*Thank you David for this. – Ed.*

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 5.**

April has been a frustrating month in that we had expected progress on a number of fronts in terms of planning and the Heads of Terms agreement with Elmbridge Council; unfortunately neither has materialised.  This is not bad news, just the way things sometimes go.  On a more positive front we had an excellent meeting with the team running the 'Grant Finder' database; this has resulted in some 400 pages plus of bodies that could potentially offer grants towards the project.   In addition we are aware of a number of corporate programmes such as that run by Screwfix that would seem to align with our proposed objectives.  We are currently working our way through the long list provided to arrive at a short list on the basis that we expect things to start moving quickly in May with Elmbridge.  Once we have an agreement with them, and approvals, then we will need to start detailed planning and costing work, based on planning requirements.  Realistically it is now likely to be the end of June before we are ready to present to the EGM and members for approval.

David Parker

**EVENTS IN MAY**

**Nosema Clinic, May 2nd, 7.30 – 9.00 pm, Community Trust Hall , Burhill Road, Hersham KT12 4BJ**

Details were in the April Newsletter and a reminder email has been sent to all members – see you there.

**Summer Meeting, Sunday May 21st**

This meeting will take place at Fairoaks Airport and will cover Queen Rearing and also Sealed Queen Cell Harvesting - yes - why waste those swarm cells?  The session will also include a practical demonstration of making up mating nucs.   Please arrive by 2.25 pm. We will then be escorted to the Apiary at 2.30 pm.  Ideally we can all pile into a few cars rather than take all of them down there as parking is a little limited.  If you arrive late please call me on 07712 079307 and I will come and collect you.   Assuming nice weather, we will then picnic on the grass in front of the apiary, watching the planes come in.  Please bring mugs, contributions of food to share and a seat, if required.

The attached (*rather grand, but very clear*) PDF explains how to get to the site, and also the health and safety rules, i.e. please do not walk into aeroplanes as their propellers turn very fast!  There are also more details on the apiary.

 David Parker

**REPORTS**

**Garden meeting at Michael Main’s house, 8th April 2017**

18 members turned up for this garden meeting. I had anticipated a cool day so planned to talk about what to do with hives needing inspection when the weather was inclement. In the event we had a glorious summer day with all the bees flying well.

I started with a short talk about what can be gleaned from a hive without opening it up by standing and watching the bees and looking at evidence around the hive.

Then I described what we were going to inspect – 2 hives that had been shook swarmed on 10th March. Both were now on double broods with most frames fully drawn and honey and pollen rapidly building up around the 7-9 frames of brood. We then moved to the colony that was to have a Bailey comb change. I had put the new box of comb on 6 days earlier and the bees had drawn several combs. The queen had obligingly moved to this new comb and had already started to lay eggs. We put the queen excluder over the old comb and then put an eke (frame of wood with an entrance block) on the queen excluder (closing the lower entrance) before placing the new box of comb with the queen above that, then came the super, crown board and roof.

I briefly told a story about another hive on which I had planned to do a shook swarm at the same time as the other 2 in March and how I had inadvertently put the queen excluder under the brood box with the queen trapped between the floor and this QE. Not surprisingly 3 weeks later when I inspected there were no eggs but the hive was behaving as if it had a queen. I eventually spotted my error and found the queen still there on the floor, looking very healthy. We did not have time to inspect this hive. We then adjourned for tea and all had a look at the club’s steam wax extractor and I explained how it worked. We also had a look at the solar wax extractor and discussed how to recycle the frames.

A good time was had by all. *I am sure it was Michael – sorry to have missed it. – Ed.*

Michael Main

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Timetable of Weybridge Summer Meetings**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hosts** | **Date** | **Status** | **Main Subject** | **Secondary Subject** |
| 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 |

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

Details in March Newsletter, page 4. Since then, we have been sent ,the schedule of the lots at the auction; see attachment.

**Surrey County Show, 29th May**

Details in March Newsletter page 2 and attachment.

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

Details in March Newsletter, page 5.

We now have a schedule for the show which is attached.

**National Honey Show, Sandown Race Course, Esher, 26-28 October**

Details in April Newsletter, page 4.

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Would you like a swarm?**

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

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)

**Hive site available**

A site is being offered to a beekeeper who may wish to keep some hives in a large garden in St George’s Hill, Weybridge. Access is available at any time. In return, the owner, Damon, would like some of the honey. Please contact him directly on 01932 847166.

**Home wanted for a colony of bees**

*The following request has been received from a man in Oxshott; it looks an interesting job for someone in need of a colony.*

‘A middling proficient bee keeper has kept bees off and on (as they came and went) over about 10 years in inherited and new WBC hives. Those that currently live in a relatively new cedar WBC hive flew in a year ago last May and installed themselves into an empty 14 x 12 Brood box with base comb on frames. The hive faces East West at the end of a garden that is really too small for them and people together. The bees moved in, decided they didn't like the layout and rebuilt comb across the brood box North and South making it impossible to get the frames out and therefore needing admin if they were going to be kept properly. No crop was taken in 2016, no feeding was given over winter and the queen is obviously laying as the hive is gathering pollen and water and activity is strong. The beekeeper is not aware of any disease. He realises that space and time are not on his side and would like to find a new home for the bees. He intends to keep the hives and equipment but if someone can save the bees and bring them on he would be very pleased. He can help move them in the hive pending another keeper re-housing them and freeing the brood box and base for his collection and use again one day in the future. He can travel and collect after re-housing but needs help lifting the base and brood into his van or the new minder's vehicle. It is obviously relevant that the new home should ideally be further than 3 miles from the postcode below. If this can be arranged sooner rather than later he would be grateful.

The post code for collection is KT22 0QU, the phone number is 01372 842280, and the email address is [ph@barringtonpublications.com](mailto:ph@barringtonpublications.com) if more convenient for contact.’

With many thanks for your help, Paul Hooper

**Walton Charity - Community Allotment Project**

This is an exciting concept being created on the Terrace Road Allotment Site in Walton, primarily for people with various disabilities, hopefully in time, to achieve a degree of independence.

The co-ordinator has organised clearance, raised beds, planting of soft fruit and some fruit trees, the site is a picture. They would now like to incorporate bees as part of the overall plan.

I have inspected the proposed site and would conclude that it would be ideal for a couple of hives. Funding may be available for safety fencing. It is unlikely that the bees would be located on site until later this year or early next, to enable the necessary work to be carried out.

If any competent beekeeper, who must reside in the Elmbridge area, is interested in being involved in this project, please contact me. See CONTACT DETAILS table at the end of the Newsletter.

Rob Chisholm – April 2017

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**More on Nosema**

Unfortunately this year, mainly due to a wide fluctuation in weather conditions and temperature this month, we were not able to complete “shook swarming” all of our colonies. By the time we got to inspect them some had at least 12 frames of healthy brood, including drone brood and play cups, so I concluded that full swarming preparation was, at best, only a couple of weeks away. When this situation occurs I do not “shook swarm” but wait until I can Artificially Swarm (Pagden) them. Providing, when it is capped, you remove and destroy the brood from the frame on which the queen went into the artificial swarm, this will have a similar effect regarding reduction of the varroa load. When there is a new laying queen in the brood part of the artificial swarm, I “shook swarm” that and scrap all the combs that have previously contained brood. Thus we finish with two colonies on clean comb both with a light varroa load, these can then be utilised as required.

At this time of year the Nosema risk will lessen as the bees will defecate away from the hive as they are not confined for extended periods.

As a last comment, the weather over the last few days has seen the bees confined, and in my experience they get up to mischief, so when it warms up a bit get ready for the swarms!

Rob Chisholm – April 2017

**More on the Asian Hornet – notes from a lecture at the recent BBKA Convention**

This was a great opportunity, as the speaker, Graham Royle (a Bee Inspector in Cheshire) was the one who found the nest in Tetbury, so the information could not be more first-hand than that.

On September 17th, 2016, a beekeeper noticed hornets near his hive, caught two and reported his findings to the National Bee Unit, who went into action immediately. A command centre was set up in Gloucester, Bee Inspectors from local and more distant parts of the country were enlisted and visits were made to all known local beekeepers in a 10km area. Flyers were widely distributed e.g. in supermarkets and car parks, and door-to-door visits were made. Traps were set up and checked regularly. One of the original hornets was released, as were others (workers) found on hedges, many miles of which were ‘walked and searched’ by the inspectors. Hornets, sometimes found feeding on ivy or on other insects on ivy, were collected, sedated with carbon dioxide, fitted with feathers or tinsel to make them more visible, then released, to determine the direction of the nest. The flight directions of the hornets were followed by the Inspectors and Graham spotted the nest, 55 feet up, near the top of a conifer. An insecticide was injected into it and the nest was observed by teams of people for the next 2 weeks; there was no further hornet activity, so the nest was removed – by Graham, from the top of a cherry picker – and taken by car to the National Bee Unit. Every part of the nest was inspected minutely and no signs of new queens were found, so it was concluded, with relief, that the nest had been destroyed before any new queens had matured and emerged to hibernate and start nests this year. The Inspectors and NBU staff did a great job.

It was emphasised that although this nest was found and destroyed, there was no room for complacency; the hornets are expected, so we must remain vigilant.

There is a mobile phone app, called Asian Hornet Watch – it could be a useful tool.

Marion Cooper

**Another serious effect of varroa recently discovered**

The following is the summary of an article published in the journal, *Nature*.

The ecto-parasitic mite *Varroa destructor* has transformed the previously inconsequential Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) into the most important honey bee viral pathogen responsible for the death of millions of colonies worldwide. (*underlining added by Ed.)* Naturally, DWV persists as a low level covert infection transmitted between nest-mates. It has long been speculated that *Varroa*, via immunosuppression of the bees, activate a covert infection into an overt one. Here we show that despite *Varroa* feeding on a population of 20–40 colonies for over 30 years on the remote island of Fernando de Noronha, Brazil no such activation has occurred and DWV loads have remained at borderline levels of detection. This supports the alternative theory that for a new vector-borne viral transmission cycle to start, an outbreak of an overt infection must first occur within the host. Therefore, we predict that this honey bee population is a ticking time-bomb, protected by its isolated position and small population size. This unique association between mite and bee persists due to the evolution of low *Varroa* reproduction rates. So the population is not adapted to tolerate *Varroa* and DWV, rather the viral quasispecies has simply not yet evolved the necessary mutations to produce a virulent variant.

L. E. Brettell & S. J. Martin

The complete article can be seen by clicking on <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep45953>

*A very sobering and unanticipated discovery. Thanks to Anne Miller for contributing this. – Ed.*

**A possible solution to the plastic waste problem**

It has been found accidentally that Greater Wax Moth larvae (the ones sometimes present in hives) appear to have the ability to break down plastic. They were found to make holes in the plastic bag in which they were ‘imprisoned’. Scientists at Cambridge University are investigating the possibility of identifying and synthesizing the enzyme in the larvae which is responsible for this effect, paving the way for research into a method for the breakdown of plastic.

For more details, click on these websites: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/scince-environment-39694553](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-39694553) and

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/04/24/plastic-eating-wax-worm-extremely-exciting-global-pollution/>

We certainly wish them every success in this work. Meanwhile as a society, we could wish that those running the world would pay more attention to the gross overuse, and unnecessary use of plastic, with the resultant ‘islands’ of plastic (and other) waste in the oceans, the most infamous of which is located in the Atlantic. It has an area of 386 000 square miles at its ‘solid’ centre (being the equivalent of a square 621 x 621 miles). On the periphery of this ‘island’ is more scattered waste, occupying a further area of 3.5 million square miles.

*Thanks to Anne Miller for drawing our attention to the wax moth information from the BBC website and the Daily Telegraph. It has also been reported in the* ***i*** *newspaper.*

**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 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 (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.

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

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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| **Dates for your diary** | | | | |
| Tuesday | 2nd May | 7.30 pm | Nosema Clinic, Hersham | p. 1 |
| Saturday | 6th May | From 12 noon | Auction, Meon Valley Beekeepers | p. 2 and March  p. 4 |
| Sunday | 21st May | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, David Parker | p. 2 |
| Monday | 29th May | All day | Surrey County Show, Guildford | p. 3 and March pp. 2, 5 and attachment |
| Thursday-Saturday | 8th-10th June | All day | South of England Show, Ardingly | p. 3 and March  p. 5 |
| 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-28th October |  | National Honey Show, Esher | April 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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| Regional Bee Inspector  Diane Steele - 01243 582612  Mobile no. 07775 119452  email: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk | Beginners’ Beekeeping Course  Andrew Halstead - 01483 489581  email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com |
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