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

***Editorial***

The main honey flow for the summer is now over, and we need to be thinking about choosing Varroa treatment for our bees. I always have a sinking feeling when asked by new beekeepers what treatment I would suggest, because the choice can be very confusing. The treatments are so variable: some are temperature dependent and hence unusable after September, others are said to have been known to kill queens, some have induced resistance in the mites (there is a test that you can do to check this), some have to be prescribed by a vet, some are disliked intensely by the bees so that they stay outside their hive and even try to enter others, some can only be used in large colonies with 8 or more frames of sealed of brood, some need full width hive entrances (an instruction that does not tally with the narrow entrances needed in the robbing season, which unfortunately coincides with the time for late summer / autumn treatment) – and so on. Of course it is important to be reasonably sure that your colony needs to be treated for Varroa before applying any treatment. It is necessary to monitor from time to time during the season by counting the mites that fall on a tray placed under the mesh floor. Although at best this can only be a rough guide to the mite population on the bees and in the brood nest, it should indicate if the varroa population is reasonably stable, growing rapidly, or high. Varroa trapping using drone brood or with a caged queen is also helpful. If the mite drop is only a two or three a day on the tray (measured twice, over a week), then treatment *may* not be needed, but this is taking a risk. However, sometimes we are horrified to find a drop of hundreds a day and are left in no doubt about the varroa population. Always check the mite drop *after* treatment to confirm its efficacy and do a final check at least a month afterwards to decide if a winter treatment with oxalic acid may also be required. If you are a new beekeeper, read up as much as you can about the many treatments, discuss them with experienced beekeepers, turn it all over in your mind, read again the article on page 237 of the July issue of the BBKA News and after all of this *come to your own conclusions.* If you rely on others you could still end up uncertain as to which is best for your own situation, and after reading this you may well be more uncertain than ever of what to do! In that case I suggest that this year you treat with *Apivar* (active ingredient, Amitraz)*.* It must be obtained from a vet, but this is no problem - just ring 01387 259111 and Robert Thurlow (a beekeeper as well as a vet) will talk you through the procedure and supply the easy-to-use *Apivar* strips within a day or two*.*

The important thing is that you do some sort of treatment.

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 8.**

As I indicated last month there has been little progress expected or achieved over the last month.  Elmbridge Council are currently compiling the report that will go to the ICMDM (in effect a meeting of a few cabinet members and interested councillors) for approval of the Heads of Terms.  We still expect this to happen in the first half of September.  Once we have a confirmed date we will advise members as the meetings are public and although we cannot participate, a strong presence has been recommended by several people as a very positive action.  We hope to have a confirmed date by the next newsletter.

David Parker

**REPORTS**

**Summer meeting, July 22nd, at Rowtown, with Paul and Helen Bunclark**

Fifteen people braved the wet weather to visit Paul and Helen’s apiary near Rowtown. Although it was not possible to open hives, we had an instructive meeting inside a barn. Paul outlined the various chemical treatments that are available for Varroa, and how to monitor the level of infestation. A discussion on their relative merits and restrictions on Varroa controls followed. Full details of Varroa treatments are available in the National Bee Unit leaflet, *Managing Varroa*, which can be downloaded from:

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167> (I think that this can still be obtained in booklet form which is well worth having).

Helen then demonstrated five ways of finding a queen that has been hard to spot.

*Method 1*. Move the brood box to a new site, replacing it with the hive’s supers or a new brood box. Flying bees return to the hive’s original site, which means there are fewer bees in the brood box to obscure the queen. Note – check the queen is not on the hive floor when the brood box is removed.

*Method 2*. Put a new brood box with some frames under the original brood box with a queen excluder between them. Flying bees will go down into the bottom box, making it easier to search the frames above the excluder.

*Method 3*. Remove half the frames in the brood box and put them in a brood box away from the hive. After about 10 minutes, note the behaviour of the bees in the two brood boxes. The quieter box is likely to have the queen.

*Method* 4. Same as 3 but space the frames in the boxes in pairs with a gap between the pairs. The queen wants to be in a dark place, so she is likely to be on the inner face of one of the paired frames.

*Method* 5. A more drastic method. Place some brood frames, preferably with unsealed brood, in a brood box, having first carefully examined them without seeing the queen. Put a queen excluder on top of the box with an empty brood box on top of that. Then shake or brush the bees from the remaining frames into the empty box. Worker bees will go down through the excluder, leaving the queen on top.

*Method* 6. Similar to 5, with a brood box with some frames in place of the original brood box. Put a ramp in front of the hive and a queen excluder over the entrance. Shake or brush bees from the original brood box onto the ramp and look for the queen trying to enter the hive.

When the queen is found, mark her thorax with some paint, so she will be much easier to spot on subsequent occasions. When searching combs for the queen, it is best to start with the ‘dark’ side of the frames. Look first round the edges because if the queen is there, she may be heading for the other side.

Many thanks to Paul and Helen for hosting this meeting at their beautiful site, and for providing the marquee and barn which kept us comfortable and dry on the very wet afternoon.

Andrew Halstead

*Notice that this report contains a very useful summary of methods for finding a queen. It is suggested that new beekeepers file it in their Apiary Record File for future reference.*

*Thank you for the report, Andrew.*

**EVENTS IN AUGUST**

**Apiary Meeting with Arran Taylor, Byfleet, Saturday August 12th, 2.30 pm**

The August meeting was to have been hosted by Chris Burnett, but he has had to go to France to visit family, so we are very grateful to one of our relatively new members, Arran, who has invited us to his home, where, in addition to acquiring some amazing equipment that he will show us, he has been doing some queen rearing, with which he is inviting us to join in. Here is his invitation:

Please be prepared to participate as this will be a very hands-on meeting, but fun I hope. We will be charging Apidea mini mating nucs with bees and hatched queens.

Address for meeting in my back garden:

9 Gaveston Close

Byfleet

Surrey

KT14 7HE

Please park wherever you can, but try not to block neighbours’ drives.

Arran G Taylor

Tea / coffee will be supplied, but please bring a contribution of food to share for the picnic, as usual.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Taster Days this year and Training Course for new beekeepers next year**

The Taster Days will be held at the Teaching Apiary behind St George’s Junior School, Weybridge on Wednesday, 16th August at 6.30 pm and Saturday 19th August at 2.00 pm. Details in July newsletter p. 3. If you have friends or family members who may be interested in taking up beekeeping, please make these meetings known to them with a warm invitation to attend. Assure them that full bee protection will be provided. Entry to these meetings is free.

**Timetable of Weybridge Summer Meetings**

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| **Hosts** | **Date** | **Status** | **Main Subject** | **Secondary Subject** |
| Arran Taylor | August 12th | Confirmed | Use of mating nucs | See p. 3, above, for details |
| Paul & Helen Bunclark  | September 9th | Confirmed | BBQ / end of Season Social | Apiary and fields behind new care home in Rowtown. Details below. |

**August Apiary Meeting – Social Event / BBQ, 9th September**

Last year due to my own failing of not organising things in advance we did not have an end of Summer Season social.  This year I am not making the same mistake.  Please book September 9th, 1 – 5pm in your diary for an end of season summer social event and a look at some bees.  Paul and Helen Bunclark, who kindly held our July meeting, have again offered to host.  The schedule of the day would be:

Turn up, BBQ 1 – 3pm.

For those who wish, about 3pm, an opportunity to have a look at some hives in the apiary – an amazing set up for anyone who could not make the July meeting – although from the report in this newsletter you will gather we did not get to see the bees in July.

Respective other halves are very welcome; the location for the social part is well away from where the bees are so it is very safe.  Children are also welcome as there is plenty of land for them run about on, kick a football, throw a frisbee, etc.  People without bee suits can also view the bees safely from behind a viewing window so no need for them even to get into a bee suit – perfect for little kids.

So please book this date in your diary. It will be a ‘bring meat and salad day’ and we can all share – hope everyone can make it even if you do not always manage to attend the summer meetings.

Best regards, David Parker

**Weybridge Beekeepers’ AGM**

Saturday 11th November. Full details later.

**Surrey BKA AGM, Saturday 2nd December 2017, 2pm to 5pm**

More information in July newsletter p. 3.

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

Details in April Newsletter, p. 4 and on the National Honey Show website.

**ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**A ‘great find’ in this country – a Carpenter Bee**

*We don’t often have the excitement of recording a rare species in our area, but our member, Richard Emmett, has managed to do this when he came across a ‘dark bee’ (see photograph in attachments) in his sister’s garden in Send and contacted Andrew Halstead, via Michael Main and others. Andrew wrote the following:*

Your dark bee is a great find in this country.  It is a Carpenter bee, *Xylocopa* species, most likely *X. violacea.  Xylocopa* species are not native to Britain but are widespread elsewhere in Europe.  Specimens are recorded in Britain from time to time, which are likely to be accidental imports from elsewhere.  However, in 2007 there was evidence that this bee had successfully bred in a Leicestershire garden.  For more information on recent sightings of *Xylocopa* species in Britain, see the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society website - <http://www.bwars.com/content/xylocopa-britain>   I am sure that BWARS will be interested to hear of the sighting in your sister's garden.

With climate change giving us longer and warmer summers, it is quite likely that Carpenter bees  could become established here and will be a regular visitor to garden flowers.  *X. violacea* seems to have a preference for flowers of the pea/bean family.  It is a solitary bee with each female constructing and provisioning her own nest without the assistance of any worker bees.  The females have powerful jaws that they use to create nest tunnels in wood - hence the name Carpenter bee.

Andrew Halstead

*Thanks to everyone involved in this.*

**Weybridge Beekeepers at the Prudential Cycle Race, Sunday 30th August**

Thanks to the major efforts of Michael Main, there was a beekeeping stand among the others involved in the Weybridge Community Day celebration on the green outside The Ship hotel in Weybridge, directly on the cycle route. There were jars of local honey and candles for sale, information boards to peruse, and numerous leaflets to distribute, advertising our beekeeping courses and providing general information about our activities. Passers by were attracted to stop and visit us when they were shown Richard Emmett’s 3-D-type pictures of bees, which made an excellent talking point. Altogether it was a very successful day, which the volunteers enjoyed and which has already resulted in some more people signing up for the Taster Sessions that precede our 2018 Beginners Course.

Marion Cooper

**Report from the scale hive in Hersham**

The main honey flow is over and this is clearly shown by the latest readings on my scale hive:

 **Dates Change Cumulative Change**

 1/7/17 - 8/7/17 +8lb 14oz +8lb 14oz

 9/7/17 - 16/7/17 -3lb 9oz +5lb 5oz

17/7/17 - 24/7/17 -2lb 10oz +2lb 11oz

25/7/17 - 31/7/17 -3lb 8oz -0lb 13oz

Thus, during the whole month of July, the weight loss was 8lb 1oz. This would be accounted for by some loss of bees, but mainly loss of stores, as the bees have used it.

**Some recent Varroa mite counts**

It may be of interest to see the following mite counts on some of my Varroa trays during the last month. The mite drop is the average per day over 7 days. All hives had at least 1 super. These seem to be remarkably low figures to me; let’s hope this continues.

All of the hives were treated with Apivar last autumn and oxalic acid sublimation in late December.

 **Hive Hive Hive**

A <2 19 <1 13 2

4 3 2 <1 13A <1

1 <1 16 4

Geoff Cooper

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Free Equipment and Training for new beekeepers through ‘Eat natural’**

The following information is particularly relevant for anyone wishing to do a training course for next year, as they get everything paid for, including the course fees.

‘Eat Natural’, the company that makes the cereal bars, started two years ago supplying Arnia Hive monitoring equipment to beekeepers for free.  I was lucky enough in the first year to be given one of the complete two-hive set ups – worth circa £1,000 and in return I have to give them a super of honey each year.   Last year they gave a hive, bees, training and monitoring equipment to a number of new beekeepers and groups/associations.

This year they have announced that on August 1st they will start their 2017 recruitment campaign and are going to recruit 50 beekeepers to join their so-called ‘Pollenation community’.

The Eat Natural Pollenation website pages have been redesigned and now have a focus on some of the 2016 recruits and Pioneers, as well as new content, a focus on partners and of course the sign up page.

<http://www.eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation/beekeepers>

<http://www.eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation/our-partners>

The closing date for all applications is 31st October and winners will be notified in November, so if you know anyone who would make a great beekeeper and Eat Natural Pollenation Ambassador then please let them know that recruitment has started and direct them to the website to apply - <http://www.eatnatural.co.uk/pollenation/become-a-beekeeper>

After the campaign they will be a 100 strong Pollenation beekeeping community passionate about bees, making honey and supporting scientific research!

*Thank you to David Parker for supplying this information.*

**Entering a honey show (part 2)**

The website address for the West End and Windlesham show given in the July newsletter was incorrect.  Information about the show and the schedule with entry forms for the honey classes can be seen on [www.wewdahs.org](http://www.wewdahs.org/).  Entries for this show close on 2 September; the show is on Saturday 9 September.

Andrew Halstead

**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 now, 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 Ged 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 COLONIES (National Standard Hoffman brood frames) with a new 2017 mated queen will be available for sale**Our bees have a gentle temperament and are good foragers. All queens are locally reared from our gentle breeding stock. Price of each colony varies depending on the size of the colony (on number of brood and super boxes). Single brood box colony £175. For more information, please contact me – details below.

**NUCS - will be available in due course (probably in next few weeks) and can be pre-ordered**

**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.

**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** |
| Saturday | August 12th | 2.30 pm | Summer Meeting, Arran Taylor, Byfleet | p. 3  |
| Wednesday | August 16th | 6.30 pm | Beekeeping Taster Day, Weybridge | p. 3 |
| Saturday | August 19th | 2.00 pm | Beekeeping Taster Day, Weybridge | p. 3 |
| Saturday | Setpember 9th | 1 – 5 pm | Social / BBQ, Rowtown | p. 3 |
| Saturday | September 9th | All day? | West End and Windlesham Show, with honey section | p. 5 |
| Thursday-Saturday  | October 26th-28th | All day | National Honey Show, Esher | April p. 4, NHS website |
| Saturday | December 2nd | 2.00 pm | Surrey BKA AGM, Croydon | July, p. 3 |
| Monday | January 22nd | 7.30 pm | First session of Beginners’ Course (Theory) | July, p. 3 |

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