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

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

***Editorial***

I hope that you will read **Update 11.** below. It really looks as if, after the seemingly interminable frustration, a definite turning point has been reached.

Even more, I hope that a decent number of our members will be able to attend the Public Meeting to show their support for those who have got us to this stage. I can’t help feeling that such a presence must have some (helpful) influence on the councillors in their deliberations and (hopefully) on their decision.

**Potential Beekeeping Centre in Pleasant Place, Hersham: Update 11.**

Today is the 28th November, and as I write this we have today in principle reached agreement with Elmbridge Council on the Heads of Terms (HOT).  The next stage is for the lease to go to ICMDM (in effect a mini cabinet meeting) with the two Elmbridge Council Members for final approval.   This meeting will be at 10 am on December 13th and held in Committee Room 3, Civic Centre, High Street, Esher.  It is a public meeting and we would encourage  any members who are free to attend.  We will not have a chance to speak, but it is good to show our support for the project.  We are very confident that the new HOT will be approved by that committee meeting.  <http://mygov.elmbridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=152&MId=2573>

So where does that leave us? This, in effect, is when the real work on the project starts.  Immediate priorities can be broken down into three main areas:  Planning Permission, Detailed Costing and Fund Raising.  The aim is that the project team will meet in December and start to allocate tasks to team members so that things can be moved forward.  The next move would be to an EGM for members to approve the project with a full costs project by April/May.  Outline timings would thus be:

Dec. 2016 Business Plan Submitted

Dec. 2017 Elmbridge Council HOT agreed

Jan/Feb Detailed plans drawn up for costing and planning application

Feb/Mar Surrey Beekeepers Trustees approve HOT

Jan/Feb/March Planning application process. Start Fund Raising

April/May EGM – Weybridge Beekeepers Meeting for approval

Jan 2018 – Sept 2018 Complete fundraising and select contractor

Nov – Feb Carry out work

Jan 2019 Move bees in

Feb Move in

April 2019 First practical course run

David Parker

**IMPORTANT REMINDER** - **Membership Subscriptions** **-­ Form attached**

The Treasurer is concerned that so many have not renewed their membership this year, so this Newsletter is being sent to ALL past members. If you have forgotten to renew, please do so as a matter of urgency, as you will be losing many benefits, such as your insurance – and these monthly newsletters!

**REPORTS**

**Weybridge Division AGM, 2.30 pm, Saturday November 11th**

A complete set of Minutes of this meeting is included as an attachment.

A few special points of interest are listed below:

* The Chairman encouraged more members to enter Honey Shows
* Paul Hildersley has stood down from the committee and two new members were elected: Paul Bunclark and Arran Taylor; all of the other existing committee members and officers were re-elected
* We were reminded of the current state of the development of our proposed new beekeeping centre in Pleasant Place
* Brief outlines of the various activities and problems of last season were outlined
* Proposed plans for the next season were described
* The best tasting honey was from Paul and Helen Bunclark. Paul Svard has sent a photograph (attached) of the winners with their trophy. Thank you Paul.

**Central Association of Bee-Keepers Kenilworth conference, November 17th-19th**

Geoff and various past members of the Weybridge Division have been attending these conferences for about 25 years, so I am a ‘relative’ newcomer, having been to only about half a dozen, but I would strongly recommend them to you all, especially now that the regular venue is a delightful hotel / conference centre with excellent facilities and abundant, very good food. Edwina Wardle was also there, so you can ask her opinion as well, but I do know that she enjoyed the weekend.

It is impossible to summarise the content of the seven lectures given over the three days, but here are some points worth passing on:

• The details of bee communication by vibrations is being detected within the hive, using impressively sensitive micro-electronic devices. We were treated to hive sounds, some of which have probably never been heard before, e.g. we heard as well as saw waggle dances! The significance of various sounds is being investigated. Incidentally, some of these sounds have been used in The Hive at Kew Gardens.

• The monitoring of pollinators, including honey bees, in controlled field experiments and in nationwide surveys was described.

• The Asian hornet ‘problem’ was explained and a sobering prospect presented of the bees and beekeepers living with them.

• The relationship of bees, Varroa and deformed wing virus was explored, and the probability that the lack of adverse effects exhibited by some mite-infested colonies of bees is more likely to be that they are infected with less virulent strains of the virus, rather than that the bees are resistant.

Marion Cooper

**EVENTS IN DECEMBER**

**Surrey Beekeepers Association Annual General Meeting 2017**

This will be held on Saturday 2nd December 2017 at 2 pm at Trinity School, Shirley Park, Croydon CR9 7AT. Full details in the November newsletter.

**FUTURE EVENTS**

**Weybridge Beginners’ Course (Theory) - First Session**

Monday, January 22nd, 7.30 pm. Hersham Community Trust Hall, Burhill Road, Hersham KT12 4BJ.

**Beekeeping Refresher / Continuation Course – January / February 2018**

As in several previous years, Tim and Sally Hutchinson will run this course if enough people sign up for it. Many of our new members tell us they would like more help, and other more established beekeepers tell us they would find some revision helpful. From past experience, we know that the course has been both informative and enjoyable. There are more details in the attachment.

**"Making good use of your beeswax" Fri 9th, Sat 10th and Sun 11th** **February 2018**

Organised by Wisborough Green BKA, a Division of West Sussex BKA. Jim Ryan will demonstrate uses of wax. The same event will take place on each of the 3 days. See November Newsletter or contact Graham - Chairman WGBKA (grahammt@sky.com) for further details.

**ITEM OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Removing a honey bee colony from a felled tree**

On a cold morning in November, Arran (Taylor) and I arrived at a house in Weybridge to remove a colony of bees from tree.  The owner had said they thought it was quite large, but we all know general members of the public think even a few bees is a lot.  On arrival we saw it was certainly a large trunk (tree surgeons had cut it down) and both ends of the hive had been exposed – it was then we realised it really was quite large, both round and long; either end was over 3 feet apart.   Luckily Arran had a variety of chain saws (including a nice ‘small’ 3-foot monster) along with splitters, etc.  A clean section was cut and we started to sort out the comb.

I had brought two nuc boxes, where one stacks on top of another.  Well the top box was quickly filled with stores -  a good 30lb plus.  As we went through the whole colony we became aware, though, that there was no brood.  This was the 19th November.  Could this be a queenless colony? Possibly, the bees did not seem to fan that much, but they were the most gentle and nice bees.  Even at this time of year, with us taking apart the whole colony, they were quiet.  Arran’s father in law from Poland, who used to keep over 100 colonies, had put a bee jacket on, but did not even bother to do it up or put the veil on!

In the end we certainly had over 40lb of stores in the boxes, the owner took away a lot of wild honey stores – much of it crystallized, and there was a big black sack of old comb as well.  This was certainly the largest wild colony I had ever seen, with comb in places over 3 feet long.  We left the double height nuc in the hollowed out tree trunk and reports are that the bees have made it a nice new home and I will move them later this week.  The colony had certainly been there a few years though, given the old comb, and stood a very good chance of surviving the winter with a huge amount of stores.

To me the really interesting thing is no brood, as if there was a queen there this would align more with the Ratnieks research that the broodless period is around mid-December, hence the best time to treat with oxalic acid, rather than early January as many have thought in the past. I will again be vapourizing all my colonies in mid-December and recording how many are broodless. As per my article last year I really do believe that this time, around the shortest day of the year, the colonies are possibly more likely to be broodless than early January, when in effect the bees are already starting to build up for the next year.

 David Parker

*A good time for all concerned: interesting for David and Arran (and the rest of us), helpful for the owners of the garden and beneficial for our Association as the owners kindly made a donation in gratitude for the work that had been done.*

*Some photos of this operation are attached – they are worth seeing.*

**ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST**

**Professor Dave Goulson - Talk on Wednesday 11th October in Walton-on-Thames: a follow-up**

If you were not able to hear this excellent talk (report in November Newsletter), Roy White has kindly sent us details of a video recording of the talk. This is available on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/16Y33t9VCEE>

I would seriously **encourage you all to look at it.**

Geoff Cooper

**Speakers wanted**

*A request from the BBKA:*

We have had a few queries from members of the public and BKAs throughout the UK asking about speakers who cover alternative topics to those listed in our current 'Speakers List.'

Topics such as cosmetics, mead making and alternative medicines have all come to the fore.

Please communicate this to your membership and if anybody is interested, could you kindly ask them to contact the office at Claire.hartry@bbka.org.uk. If anybody is available to talk on cosmetics in early 2018, one of our Yorkshire BKAs has expressed an interest in hosting a speaker at their event.

Claire Hartry (Fundraising Administrator B)

**Some links that you will find of interest**

David Parker has drawn the following to our attention:

*Strongest evidence yet that neonicotinoids are killing bees*

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg23531334-900-strongest-evidence-yet-that-neonicotinoids-are-killing-bees/>

*The Great British Bee Count*

https://www.foe.co.uk/bee-count

*Bees with Backpacks: Keeping the Hive Alive*

https://iq.intel.com/bees-with-backpacks-keep-the-hive-alive/

*Colony Loss 2016-2017: Preliminary Results*

https://beeinformed.org/results/colony-loss-2016-2017-preliminary-results/

*Data Analysis on Bee Decline and a Nice competition for Beekeepers to enter*

https://www.intel.co.uk/content/www/uk/en/it-management/cloud-analytic-hub/save-bees-with-big-data.html

David also sent in the following, which I am very concerned about as it in the public domain and therefore potentially dangerous. It seems to be a remarkably amateurish item. It has been suggested that it could be a joke: if this is the case it is a distasteful and poor one, but if it is a serious article, then it is even more dangerous. Let me know what you think about it.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/business-41921047/ceo-secrets-using-bees-to-protect-crops>

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| **Dates for your diary** |
| Saturday | December 2nd | 2.00 pm | Surrey BKA AGM, Croydon | p. 2 |
| Monday | January 22nd | 7.30 pm | First session of Weybridge Beginners’ Course (Theory) | p. 2  |
| tba | January / February | 7.30 pm | Refresher / Continuation Course | p. 3 + attachment |
| Friday, Saturday, Sunday  | February 9th, 10th, 11th | 10.00 am – 4.30-5.00 pm | Uses of Wax Day, Tim Ryan, Petworth, W. Sussex | p. 4November p. 3 + attachment |
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| Beginners’ Beekeeping Course TutorAndrew Halstead - 01483 489581email: ahalstead44@btinternet.com  | SwarmsMichael Main – 01932 849080 email: michaelfmain@hotmail.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 | Beekeepers Beginners’ Course - AdminSue Lawesslawes@hotmail.co.uk  |
| **Regional Bee Inspector**Sandra Gray – 07775 119430sandra.gray@apha.gsi.gov.uk  | Seasonal Bee InspectorHilary Hayward - 07900 167409Email: Hilary.Hayward@apha.gsi.gov.uk |
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