

BEE NEWS



Diary Dates

Intermediates Winter course starts
Esher College

Saturday 27 February
Clean up the Apiary

Saturday 5 March
Surrey Bee Day
Cobham Village Hall

Saturday 12 March
Apiary Opens

Saturday 19 March
Bailey Comb Change
The Apiary 2 - 4 PM

Sunday 26 March
Disease Inspection
The Apiary 2 - 4 PM

8 - 10 April
BBKA Spring Convention
Harper Adams University

Monday 30 May
Surrey County Show



Apiary Managers' Report

Avis Marshall

The next beekeeping season is already underway and the hives need checking for adequate supplies. At the National Honey Show in October at Weybridge an American researcher had kept records of the stores consumed by bees in an apiary. She found that bees which kept breeding consumed the most stores. It was completely random as to which hives in the same apiary had dramatically reduced egg laying whereas others had copious amounts of brood. The weather is an unreliable indicator therefore as to brood activity.

In consequence, we hefted all the hives in the Hampton Court Apiary. This is an unreliable indicator as it is impossible to know whether the weight is brood or stores. Those that were light we fed and removed the crown boards of others to try and ascertain whether stores were left. The bees certainly did not appreciate being disturbed, but with an impending cold snap when they would be unable to fly, it was better to ensure that they did have access to food. This autumn/winter they have barely stopped flying. In fact, last Sunday the temperature in the apiary was higher than when we were doing regular weekly inspection in Spring 2015. Copious amounts of pollen are going into the hives but difficult to know whether they are still finding nectar. Stores, which had been left on in August, in some cases, had been used by October. Another set of unusual circumstances, and it may be wise just to feed all hives at the cost of a few pounds compared to the loss of a colony as the bees will only take it if they need it.

The 2016 Committee

Derek Jones

Chairman, SBKA Council
Representative, and webmaster

Avis Marshall

Apiary manager and
SBKA Educational committee

Anne Jones

Treasurer

Julie Hogarth

Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and
Surrey County Show committee

John Legate

Trustee/Surrey Beekeepers
Association

Chris Reid**Keith McMahan**

Stephen Hall Bee Clinic

Marion Hall Bee Clinic and
Membership

Mike Axford

Art director: web and newsletter
Surrey County Show committee

The winter training courses continue apace. The beginners' theory class is full of enthusiastic people and the next Module 7/queen rearing session continues. Although, it is structured on the examination syllabus very few people actually sit the module, it is just an excellent way of learning more about beekeeping and exchanging ideas, so please do come along.

If you have not yet taken your basic assessment and have kept bees for at least a year, then 2016 is the year to achieve it. Allotment societies and other landowners, who allow apiaries on their land, are mostly requesting that beekeepers have this qualification to ensure responsible beekeeping. In due course details will be emailed.

Keith McMahan has undertaken to purchase 25 blackthorn whips to fill in the gaps along the boundary fence to deter intruders. Please could you come along to the apiary on Saturday, 27th February at 2pm to help plant them, have a bonfire of the remaining wood, and lay some slabs to the new shed. A large number of people for two hours will ensure we really are ready to commence the new season. Free refreshments of course.

Although the number of hives has been reduced in the apiary, there are still three for intermediates and five for queen rearing. The intermediate hives hopefully will produce some honey but techniques such as Bailey comb change and shook swarm will be demonstrated. We also need a dedicated team for queen rearing. The overall aim is to produce enough queens for the apiary and nucs for the beginners and some spares for members. Everybody is welcome so please come along and enjoy Saturday afternoons.

If this warm weather continues, then the apiary will be open from 12th March, and no doubt the bees will be anxious to swarm at the earliest possible moment. However, hope to see everyone on the 27th February and a good beekeeping year to you all.



WINTER COURSE

At Esher College

This year the focus is on queen rearing and genetics and we are following Module 7 of the BBKA exam series. We are looking at queen rearing for beekeepers with 5 to 10 hives, queen introduction, setting up mating nuclei, mating behaviour and drone laying queens. These are just some of the fascinating topics. This is done in a very relaxed 'study group' style with each person taking a small section of the syllabus and researching that area and sharing their findings. The exam can be taken in March but there is absolutely no pressure to do so, the aim is to further our knowledge of beekeeping in a very important area.

Winter courses are open to all members, apart from absolute beginners. The cost is approx £10, for the four evenings, purely to cover the cost of hiring the classroom. If you haven't already joined the study group this year, join in 2017!



One Day Course

Can I keep Bees: 5 June

We continue to provide our one day 'Taster' courses for potential beekeepers to experience 'a light touch' insight to the complexities, joys and frustrations of keeping bees. The programme includes an introduction to our club and our bees, health & safety, demo of hive parts, hygiene, flaming of boxes, disease, varroa, swarm control, making frames, lighting a 'smoker', and of course opening and handling a hive to identify workers, drones and the all-important Queen. The order of events is always weather dependent and temperament of the bees. We faced a challenge with our bees in 2015 but never to be deterred we worked around the potential issues and delivered two very successful one day courses – with a number of the delegates now signed up to the 2016 Beginners Course, it's clear these courses help people to come to terms with their potential abilities (some of our students really don't like the bees close up or find the various elements of beekeeping daunting and would never know this without the one day course, whilst others are naturals). We cannot deliver these courses and training without the assistance of our membership – looking ahead, if you would like to take part in 2016 courses please register your interest with one of the committee members.



Exam success for Steve, Jonathan and Andy - well done



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers needed to help out with the Surrey Beekeepers tent at the County Show on **Monday 30 May** It's a great day talking bees and meeting interesting people - and you get a free lunch too, help is need with rolling candles, the honey tasting, straw draw, information stand and with the live bee demonstrations every hour.

We need 300 scones for the honey tasting - if a few of us can make 50 each, that's only six volunteers - they are only 25mm (1") in diameter.

We need honey show entrants - there's loads of classes and prizes! Kingston hasn't entered recently, now with Frank winning the Surrey honey section at the National, and Keith achieving significant recognition for his single frame too. Its time for you to enter. Hazel gave us all her tips required last year. There's even a section for novices: now that's nearly all of us as we haven't entered previously.



Honey competition

Surrey County Show, Stoke Park, Guildford
Bank Holiday Monday 30th May 2016

Organised in conjunction with the
Surrey Beekeepers' Association



Prizes

1st £5.00, 2nd £3.00, 3rd £2.00, 4th £1.00

A contribution to the prize money has been kindly donated by the
Surrey Beekeepers' Association.

Judge: Wg Cmdr Tom Salter (Hampshire)

Classes are open to all and any beekeeper may enter.

*"If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only
four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no
more animals, no more man". Albert Einstein*

11th Surrey Bee Day

Saturday 5 March 2016

9.30am Registration,
10am Start – 5pm Close

Cobham Village Hall, Lushington Drive, Cobham KT11 2L

Programme & Speakers

Pam Hunter – 'When the King became a Queen'

Pam, a Master Beekeeper, is currently Chair of the BBKA
Examinations Board.

Dan Basterfield – 'Reading a Hive'

Dan is a bee farmer and well known lecturer on the craft of
beekeeping. He holds the National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB).

Juliet Osborne – 'An Overview of Current Research'

Juliet recently moved from Rothamsted Research and is now a
Professor at Exeter University's Environment & Sustainability
Institute.

Margaret Murdin – 'Years 2-11 in Beekeeping'

Margaret is a Master Beekeeper, holds the NDB and is currently
Chair of the BBKA Trustees.

Tickets £24 including lunch, from:

Sandra Rickwood 19 Kenwood Drive

Walton on Thames KT12 5AU

01932 244326 rickwoodsba@gmail.com

Please make cheques payable to 'Surrey Beekeepers
Association'