

SBKA EPSOM DIVISION NEWSLETTER JUNE 2012

*Apiary at: Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2AF
Registered Charity No 1026386*

Committee News

It has been a very depressing season so far for beekeeping! Unfortunately after getting the colonies onto clean foundation the weather held them back from drawing the wax out quickly. We have had a major outbreak of Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus (CBPV – see attached information) which has swept through several hives and caused at least two to die out. We spent a morning with Alan Byham the Regional Bee Inspector inspecting the hives specifically for disease and he confirmed the diagnosis. Due to the adverse weather the bees have been confined within the hive and the virus has spread quickly around the bees – drifting has aided the spread to other colonies. Hopefully as the weather picks up, new brood coming through (virus free) will replace the diseased ones – but this relies on healthy, laying queens and strong colonies – watch this space! Members are reminded that if they have any concerns over disease or if a hive dies out unexpectedly then please make use of the free inspection service provided by the National Bee Unit.

Regional Bee Inspector – Alan Byham 07775119447 or Seasonal Bee Inspector Brian McCallum 07775119478.

Keeping on the subject disease, the committee have made a decision to tighten up on swarm allocation procedures. In the past a 'swarm list' has been displayed for members wanting another colony. This will no longer happen. It is vital that swarms are quarantined and assessed for disease status, viability and temperament before being allocated to a beekeeper – as recommended by the National Bee Unit. Swarms should be collected responsibly, especially important in public places, and we have two very experienced swarm collectors who represent the Epsom Division to do this. Members will be informed when there are suitable swarms available. Members are reminded that should they decide to attempt to collect a swarm themselves then they need to be aware of the guidance advice available and to ensure that subsequently appropriate quarantine is carried out to minimise spread of disease.

We would also like to remind members that when selling products, the BBKA product insurance/liability cover only applies to 'products from the hive' – honey, wax and propolis. If members decide to sell any other product to the public including those such as cakes, sweets, creams, soaps, coloured or perfumed candles etc then it is recommended that separate, individual cover is taken out.

'The insurance company Hiscox, cover all products that are from the Hive and not contaminated by another element, so it has to be a pure product for example: Honey which has no other added ingredients, Lip balm made from honey and beeswax, Candles with no added perfumes etc. The reason for this is that should a product proved to be faulty and there be an added ingredient, is it the hive product or the additive that caused the fault/problem? If cakes etc were to be covered, the insurance company would require lists of all products made, ingredients used by all members, every product would then need to comply with certain standards such as food hygiene and production. Premiums would be on an individual basis and therefore prohibitively high. When making candles if the sheets are bought in from an external supplier then the insurance claim would then fall back to the sheet supplier rather than the individual. For those that are baking cakes and making confectionary it would be advisable to acquire a basic food hygiene certificate as this can provide a level of self protection and courses can be done on line.'

The full insurance policy can be viewed online through the BBKA website or there is a hard copy displayed on the notice board in the classroom.

On Sunday May 20th Pete Smith and I ran the 'Taster Day' where 11 members of the public had the opportunity to learn about responsible beekeeping, how the colony works and time, money, equipment involved etc. After lunch we all suited up and inspected a few of the apiary hives. It was a very successful day and the feedback provided was excellent. Many thanks to Sue Brookes and Madeleine Knee for their excellent catering skills!

We will be holding an apiary open day on July 14th to coincide with the Ewell Village Fair. Members of the public will be able to visit the apiary to find out more about keeping bees, courses available etc. If you would like to be

involved with this we would love your support – if you are happy to give up just an hour or two of your day to chat to the public, help with tea and coffee etc please let me know.

We have a series of talks coming up in June which we hope will encourage you to think about entering our Epsom Division Honey show on September 22nd. We will be holding a BBQ in the evening to celebrate the Epsom Division and the beekeeping season and have an opportunity to socialise over food and a few drinks! (details to follow).

Tuesday evening 'club nights' are proving very successful and I would like to thank beekeepers who regularly attend to support the beginners. Please view the online diary (Epsom Beekeepers website) for up to date weekly topics. We are planning ahead so if you have any good ideas for new/interesting topics or can recommend a speaker etc please let us know. The apiary is open from 6.30pm with any scheduled talks/discussion starting promptly at 7.30pm.

We have received a lovely thank you card and donation from Audrey Austin for selling her late husband's beekeeping equipment – I have displayed this on the classroom notice board. Liz Knee

Training Opportunities

Basic Food Hygiene Certificate- I am awaiting contact from the examiner and have a few expressions of interest from Epsom and other Surrey divisions. Once we get a date set up we will circulate more details.

Dates for Your Diary

Club Tuesday Nights- Club nights are free for members. When there is a named speaker the session will run from 7 for 7.30pm until 9.30pm. The hut will be open from 6.30pm on non speaker nights.

Tuesday 5th June - APIARY CLOSED BANK HOLIDAY

Tuesday 12th June 'Preparing honey and wax for a show' Marysia Owsianka

July 17th - NO CLUB MEETING - facility booked out for Divisional meeting

Saturday 22nd September - Epsom Division Honey Show and BBQ

Talks

June 12th - 'Preparing Honey and Wax for a Show' with Marysia Owsianka. 7 for 7.30pm until 9.30pm

July 3rd - 'Judging Honey and Wax in a Show' with Mollie Bonnard. 7 for 7.30pm until 9.30pm

Oct 23rd - Dr Michael Keith-Lucas 'Pollen in forensic science'. 7.30 - 9.30pm. Dr Keith-Lucas is a CPS expert witness from Reading University. His speech at the Surrey Bee Day was fascinating and thoroughly entertaining! 7 for 7.30pm until 9.30pm

June 4th Surrey County Honey Show- at Stoke Park Guildford. Entries must be in by 4 May.

June 7-9th South of England Show- Entry forms & schedules of the show classes for the Bees & Honey Section are available from Pauline Sparkes Show secretary after 10 April from Mrs P Sparkes, 4 Chalmers Close, Charlwood, Horley, Surrey, RH6 ODP. E-mail sparkes-1@tiscali.co.uk Phone 01293 862063. The show runs from Thursday 7 June to Saturday 9 June. Entries must be delivered to the show ground Wednesday or before 8.00am Thursday morning

June 9th 2012 Carshalton Carnival, Carshalton Park, Ruskin Road, Carshalton. Set up 8.30am. Help required manning the stall, also a Gazebo plus 3 tables. If you could offer some help with any of these or to find out more about the day please email Mollie (moleandbee@gmail.com) or Jill (jf.honeybee@myself.com)

June 9th Ashted Village Day. On Saturday 9th June, Ashted will be holding its Village Day event, with stalls and entertainment in the Recreation Ground from 12 noon till 4.30pm. There will be music, dancing, a dog display team, a tightrope walker, a ferris wheel, bungee swings, a rock climbing wall, a formula 1 simulator and lots of other things. It's all great fun and well worth a visit. Transition Ashted will be having a stall there, where they are going to be promoting local food. They have offered to sell honey if anyone in EBKA has any that they want to sell. They are also looking for one or two beekeepers to join them on the stall to help explain to people about bees and beekeeping. If anyone is willing to spare a bit of time, or has any honey they want to sell, please contact Hilary Livesey on 07917 205871.

July 14th Saturday Apiary Open Day- to coincide with Ewell Village Fair - further details to follow

September 15th Sutton Good Dog Show Beddington Park- Mollie Bonard and Jill Forbes will be running a honey stall from 11 am - 4pm Beddington Park, Wallington. Help still required, set up 9am. Also required a gazebo and

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3 tables. Help will be required to collect and erect the gazebo (from 9am), run the stall, tidy up and pack away at the end of the day. If you could offer some help with any of these or to find out more about the day please email Mollie (moleandbee@gmail.com) or Jill (jf.honeybee@myself.com)

Other Items

Beddington Park May Fayre 7 May- We didn't have the best weather on bank holiday Monday but 4 of us braved the elements to sell bee related items and promote the association and the plight of the bee. Eileen and Tetley supported by a flying bee balloon, sold raffle tickets for a basket full of honey wares. It was a fun day with clog dancers, duck races and firemen.



Help is still needed for the 2 remaining fairs on 9 June and 15 September. If you can spare just an hour to set up or take down or during the day it would help enormously to spread the load. Please see above for details



Cuprinol and bee hives taken from the Weybridge newsletter

This is the reply I received from the manufacturers a few days ago, when I asked them about using their wood preserving products on hives.

'I can confirm that our formulations have changed and that currently none of our products are suitable for this type of application.'

This is clear confirmation of 'rumours' to this effect that have come to our notice over the past year or two. Note that this means that we should no longer use the Cuprinol Clear preservative that many of us have used for many years on our hives. I also had a word with Thorne's, and they confirmed that they no longer recommend 'Cuprinol Clear'. Thorne's can supply a water-based wood treatment called 'Lifetime', but they say it is cosmetic rather than preservative. They also confirmed that cedar hives do not require preservation materials to be applied, although they do weather to a greyish colour. Geoff Cooper

A request from Eileen Dann- Epsom Garden Society is celebrating its 80th year at their show on 23rd June at St Martin's School in Ashley Road, Epsom. The show is from 2pm to 4pm and entry is free. If anyone could please spare some plants for the plant stall the society would be very appreciative. They could be taken to the school between 5pm and 5.30pm on the 22nd or the morning of the 23rd before 11.00am, or contact Eileen Dann (07796 405752).

London Beekeeper wanted- High Down Prison are providing hives for a restaurant owner on London. Once they have colonies of bees in them, they will require looking after! If any member is interested in taking up this offer please contact the owner. Cyrus Rustom Todiwala OBE DL DBA, Cafe Spice NAMASTE, 16 Prescott Street, London E1 8AZ

Bee Disease Module Study Group- A study group is being set up to work towards taking the module exam on Bee Disease in November 2012. There are a number of interested beekeepers from various divisions and the initial meeting to discuss a study 'plan' will be held on Wednesday 13th June at the apiary. If anyone is interested in joining this group please let me know asap. liz.knee@googlemail.com

Bookings for Honey Extraction- A new calendar has been put up on the wall in the Apiary's Honey Extraction Room for booking the room to extract honey.

EBKA Questionnaire- Thank you very much to all those who took the time to complete our survey. The results are very encouraging and will be useful to help us to drive the club forward in the direction chosen by you, the members. Please see the attached result sheet, but as a short summary.....

49 members completed the survey. Of those that responded.....

55% have been a member of the association of between 1-5 years

51% have been keeping bees for between 1 and 5 years

33% attend the apiary monthly

27% attend weekly

63% attend the apiary to learn

64% think that the primary purpose of the club is collaborative learning

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35% think that the secondary purpose is to teach
75% think that the Tuesday 'club nights' should concentrate on lectures/talks
46% use the website less often than monthly

From the results we will....

Continue with a program of Tuesday night talks, lectures, demonstrations etc and make teaching and learning a focus of the association

Continue to provide support for those wishing to progress with exams/modules

Continue to supply beekeeping equipment (shop)

Continue with 'social' events

Encourage more members to attend on a weekly basis

Encourage more members to use the website regularly

Question from Pink Class, Castlehill Primary School, Kingston- A question that stumped me when I went to see them recently. Why do female worker bees do all the work? Without going into complex evolutionary replies, any suggestions?

Members BDI Insurance Certificates

These are held centrally. If a member needs a copy please contact Hilary Livesey

Bee Base

If members have not already registered on BeeBase (FERA National Bee Unit website) then please take a moment to look at it and register your hives. <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/>

Items for Sale/Hire/Wanted

For Hire We would like to take this opportunity to remind members that you may hire the kitchen for honey extraction at a cost of £10 per session. There are also a number of honey extractors for hire, again at £10, which can be used on site or taken home for use. We kindly ask that the kitchen and all equipment used are cleaned thoroughly ready for the next person and equipment taken off site is returned asap. There is a calendar displayed on the wall in the kitchen for completion if you want to book the kitchen/equipment and a book to note down name and contact details. Please liaise with Liz Knee or Steve Secker for access.

...and finally- Gravity disturbs bees' dancing

By Ella Davies Reporter, BBC Nature

Honey bees that dance to give directions to flowers make more errors when performing horizontally due to gravity, say researchers. Female foragers perform "waggle runs" on the hive's honeycomb for other bees.

The intricate movements display the direction and distance of the flowers from the hive.

Researchers from the University of Sussex are "eavesdropping" on bees to find out more about where they feed in Britain.

Dr Margaret Couvillon has spent three years decoding the bees' unique method of communication.

Using observation hives with a glass wall, researchers have filmed the bees without disturbing their natural behaviour.

The angle the waggle dance is performed at communicates the position of the flower relative to the sun, while the duration of the waggle tells nest mates how far away the flower is from the hive.

Foragers repeat these runs in a figure of eight with the number of repetitions signifying the quality of the resource.

By studying the video footage, Dr Couvillon found that bees dancing vertically on the honeycomb made few "errors", repeating identical runs throughout the dance. But bees dancing on the horizontal had more scattered runs.

"They have a hard time when they're dancing horizontally - the angles that they dance repeatedly are very different," Dr Couvillon told BBC Nature.

Although the individual runs contained errors, an average calculated from all of the runs still provided accurate directions.



Dr Couvillon suggested that the inconsistencies could be attributed to gravity; when the bees are vertical on the comb they are aligned with the downward force but dancing horizontally requires more effort.

"If you were a rock climber and I asked you to get something to your right, at 90 degrees, it would be more difficult than getting something straight ahead of you," she explained.

The results feed into an ongoing debate in the scientific community over whether the variation in waggle dances happens because bees are communicating a general area, not a specific flower, or simply because they are trying their best in difficult circumstances.

"There's no reason why a bee would need to introduce scatter into a dance," said Dr Couvillon.

"I do think the bees are challenged but I still think they're pretty good at what they're doing."

Paraphrased from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/17727811>

'Queens Battle for the top spot' - You've probably seen this fascinating BBC film from Natural World- Queen of the Savannah. It shows 2 emerging queen bees fighting for the crown.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/European_honey_bee#p00qj4kv

Did you know... In the days of knights in armour the opposing forces used to get around the castle make their catapults to fire bees, wasps and all sorts of smelly refuse over the walls to create A bad atmosphere for the inhabitants of the castle.

Newsletter Items

If you have any news, items of interest, book or course reviews for the news letter please send them to our **new email address** newsletter@epsombeekeepers.co.uk. If you change your email address please let us know

Please check in from time to time with our new look website, its being updated all the time @ www.epsombeekeepers.co.uk

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