



SBKA EPSOM DIVISION NEWSLETTER MAY 2011

Apiary at: Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey KT17 2AF

Registered Charity No 1026386

Website: www.epsombeekkeepers.co.uk

Apiary News

News from Marysia Owsianka

You may have seen an article on the Random Apiary Survey in the May issue of the BBKA news. As part of the Healthy Bee Plan it involves bee samples from wide ranging randomly chosen apiaries in England and Wales to be tested for a wide range of diseases, affecting both the brood and the adult bees. Funded by the Government it is the widest such investigation of bee health in the world.

Just before Easter I was contacted as Apiary Manager by our seasonal Bee Inspector Brian McCallum, and told that our Apiary at Ewell had been chosen to take part in the survey. We arranged a visit for Saturday 30th April at the time of the usual practical beekeeping class. All the students present were able to observe him as he took samples of adult bees and examined the brood combs.

Unfortunately none of the Apiary hives contained open brood which could have been checked for EFB. Some of the hives had swarmed, others had lost queens without swarming. No.1 hive had been trying to supercede their queen, who appeared to be very unwell and had stopped laying. It transpired that the queen cell they had constructed contained a drone larva. This was removed, the bees drew out a new queen cell from donated eggs and on the 30th April their new queen had just started laying. In No.3 hive I had lost the queen whilst trying to make an artificial swarm. The emergency cells gave us the possibility of a new queen plus 2 nucs. Both nucs now have queens, one is already laying, as of the 3rd May. Another nuc was made up from hive No.4. The remaining hives, No.s 2,4,,5,6 and 7 have all been discovered to have sealed queen cells. I am not convinced that all of them swarmed, some may have lost their queens. This sudden disappearance of queens is very worrying. I have never observed it in the past, at least not on such a scale. The Spring health clinic showed that most of the hives have Nosema, which must add to the problem. No.1 has been put on clean comb, others are gradually having their combs changed. In addition No.4 has significant Chalk Brood and should be re-queened, possibly from a nuc deriving from the Buckfast strain.

To sum up: we now have seven Apiary hives and 3 nucs, but at present only 2 laying queens. I am afraid this may mean we shall miss the best of the nectar flow and the honey harvest will be poor. We still have room for a few more hives in the Apiary.

Finally I would like to make an appeal for someone to co-ordinate maintenance work at the Apiary. In the past couple of years we used to meet on one Saturday a month to deal with gardening work, cleaning, and/or painting the hut, and cleaning and repairing equipment. There are many willing hands but someone must set the dates and work to be done in consultation with the Committee and inform the Newsletter editors. This person does not need to be an experienced beekeeper – perhaps one of our new members could take it on?

News from NESCOL

If you would like to visit the site or are interested in keeping your bees there please contact Liz on 0208 786 8170 or by email liz.knee@googlemail.com

New Members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome to the following new members: Chris Drabble, Peter Gilbert, Neil Manley, Lucy Smith, Linda and David Popple, Hilary Livesey, Mark Gale.

Forthcoming Events at the Apiary...

An introduction to Beekeeping 'Taster Day'

A one day course to be held on Sunday 8th May 2011 at Epsom Apiary. For more information contact:
info@epsombeekkeepers.co.uk

Photography Evening with Steve Wicks

Thursday 12th May 2011

7.30pm at the Apiary Clubhouse.

Cost: £2

Begin photographing your bees – hints and advice for successful bee photography!

Don't forget to bring your camera!

Meeting the training needs of Epsom Beekeepers' A steering group is being set up to discuss the future training requirements for club members, whether beginners or more experienced beekeepers. A preliminary meeting will be held on 23rd May, and anyone wishing to suggest topics and ideas for the group to discuss is invited to email Peter Smith on <mailto:info@ebkabeekeepers.co.uk>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2011

May-08	Beekeeping Taster Day
May 12	NEW - Bee Photography – 7.30pm Apiary Clubhouse
May 14	NEW – Craft Fair – Oaks Park 10 – 3pm
May 21/23	Hygienic Bee Workshop - University of Sussex
May-21	NEW – SUSSEX BEE MARKET – see below for details
May-30	Surrey County Show
June 3rd	NEW - SBKA Husbandry workshop – Claygate - see below for details
June 9-11	NEW - Ardingly Show - Details below
June 17/18	Decode the Waggle Dance Workshop – University of Sussex
Jun-18	Summer BBQ at the Apiary
Jul-16	Epsom Open Day at the Apiary
Jul-16	Garden Plants For Bees Workshop- University of Sussex
Jul 24/25	Lavender Fields Open Weekend Event , Carshalton
Aug 5-7	First UK Natural Bee Keeping Conference 2011
Sep-10	Epsom Honey Show
Oct 27/29	National Honey Show, Weybridge
Nov-12	Epsom AGM
Dec-03	SBKA AGM at the Tilford institute, Tilford, Nr Farnham

SURREY COUNTY SHOW – LATE ENTRIES.....

We have only just received the entry forms and schedule of classes for the Honey Show at the Surrey County Show. Unfortunately entries closed on the 29th April, but late entries are accepted until May 17th but will not be listed in the Show Catalogue. Please collect an entry form from the Apiary or download the form from our website news page <http://epsombeekkeepers.co.uk/> Special reductions apply for exhibitors.

HUSBANDRY WORKSHOP Alan Byham. Regional Bee Inspector

Friday 3rd June Claygate, Surrey. 9.45- 4.00pm. £8, payable to SBKA, post with name/address/tel/email to Serena Fraser, 8 Claremont Rd, Claygate, Esher Surrey KT10 0PL. Workshops inc. Bee Improvement, Feeding, Nosema, Hygiene, talks on Honey – risks/responsibility from hive to honey jar /Simple Beekeeping/tips for Successful Beekeeping – so lots to listen to! This event is open to all SBKA members also all our neighbouring associations, Twickenham, London, Sussex, Kent. Event to be held at Holy Trinity Church Hall. Church Rd, Claygate, Esher, Surrey. KT10 0JP.

Any questions, contact Serena Fraser 01372 464885/ serena@thefrasers8.plus.com

Sussex Beekeepers' Association Bee Market 21st May 2011

Heathfield Community College, East Sussex TN21 8RJ

Starts at 10am: stalls, new & old beekeeping equipment. Produce, Plants, Books, and various attractions. Refreshments available.

Auction at 2 pm of equipment & bees.

See the Sussex BKA website for more details.

<http://www.sussexbee.org.uk/>

Burt's Bees.....

Would you like to bid for a hive decorated by Celia Birtwell, Alex Monroe, Joanna Lumley or Jodie Kidd? See the BBKA website for more information about the celebrity Beehive Auction!

The Oaks Spring Fair 14th May 2011 at

The Oaks Golf Centre, Woodmansterne Road, Carshalton SM5 4AN

From 10 – 3pm

In aid of The MS Society. We will have a stall selling bee products, honey and preserves. Please contact Mollie Bonard moleandbee@gmail.com if you have produce to sell.

South of England Agricultural Show, Ardingly 9,10 & 11th June 2011

Entry forms for the Honey classes have just been received at the Apiary. Late entries can be accepted only until the 11th May 2011, so you will have to be very quick off the mark – entry forms available at the apiary this Saturday. Stewards are also required.

The National Honey Show 27 -29th October 2011 – Offer for New Beekeepers

If you joined Epsom Beekeepers Association after 1 August 2010, the National Honey Show is offering you a reduced entry fee of £5 rather than £15. Please contact our Club Secretary Peter Smith peter@pfhc.co.uk to apply on your behalf. Cut off date for applications are 31 July 2011. For more information see BBKA News May 2011.

Bees in the News.....

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/manuka-honey-may-fight-superbugs-study-2267640.html>

http://www.smallholder.co.uk/news/8995884.Award_winning_paper_highlights_bee_declines/

<http://www.flintshirechronicle.co.uk/flintshire-news/local-flintshire-news/2011/05/05/greenfield-campaigner-calls-for-bee-protection-with-pesticide-testing-51352-28634898/>

<http://www.vita-europe.com> manufacturers of Apiguard and Vita Feed, and the largest honeybee health company in the world have relaunched their website and photo gallery. The next potential threat to honey bees is the Asian hornet – currently devouring French bees and waiting for an opportunity to cross the channel.

Asian hornet threatens British bees:

An Asian hornet is heading for Britain that could wipe out our native honey bee hives, experts have warned.

The predator insect "picks off" honey bees as they leave the hive until their colony is so exhausted the hornets can move in and destroy it completely. It is thought the hornet first invaded France in 2004 in plant pots imported to Bordeaux from China. Within a few years beekeepers in the area were suffering up to 70 per cent colony losses and are still struggling to control the problem. Now experts fear the insects could be accidentally imported into Britain within food or wine within a few years.

Tim Lovett, of the British Beekeepers' Association, said climate change could make the threat worse. "People are on the look out for [the Asian hornet], most definitely," he said. "It is an unpleasant little critter." Groups from five to 50 of the Asian hornets hover in front of a hive, picking off single honeybees by decapitating them and stripping off their wings and legs before making off with the "meat ball" to their nest to feed their young. As the attacks continue, the honeybee colony stops flying and has to consume its own stores, eventually weakening it to such a point that an invasion force of many hornets enters the hive to rob it.

The Asian hornet is slightly smaller than its European counterpart is already found in the south of England, but it is much more deadly.

The UK honeybee population is already struggling with the varroa mite, also imported into the country from Asia, with a fifth of hives lost in the winter of 2008/09.

Mr Lovett said more invasive species like the Asian hornet and American small hive beetle could make the situation worse. "Invasive" species are another threat on top of the problems already suffered by British beekeepers," he said.

Dr Max Watkins, of the UK-based honey bee healthy company Vita (Europe) Ltd, said the pests could colonise Britain within a few years. "We cannot tell if or when the hornet might reach Britain, but since it is already near St Malo in northern France and since it seems to survive well in these climates, its arrival in the next few seasons looks likely," he said.

Francis Ratnieks, Professor of Apiculture at Sussex University, said experts are watching the Asian hornet closely. But he said it was too early to tell if the insect could establish itself this far north.

Louise Gray, Daily Telegraph 14/4/2011

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