

BEE NEWS



Forthcoming events

Please note that there are sessions in the diary specifically for second year beekeepers or anyone else who wants to refresh their memories. As the weather was kind the Bailey change has commenced at the Apiary but there will be further practical sessions.

The beginners' practical sessions commence on **2nd April** and assistance will always be appreciated from existing members, in particular from anyone not going to Stoneleigh on **16 April**, and not away for the Easter weekend, **23 April**.

The Bee Inspectors from FERA will be coming to the Apiary on **19 April** to examine all hives in the apiary for disease and in particular, the notifiable foulbroods. If you are around, this is an excellent opportunity to learn from really experienced beekeepers who examine hundreds of hives every year.

The **30th April** has been reserved solely for intermediates to concentrate on the technicalities of swarm control. The bees might even cooperate too and we could get to do it for real

BEE INSPECTORS'S VISIT 19th APRIL

All welcome, come and watch, and hear their views on the apiary hives - chance to meet Alan and see what a wealth of knowledge he brings to us.

He is also running one of our Training Days on June 3rd.

Apiary Managers' Report

The first winter loss has occurred in the Apiary and no 7 hive is no more. This is very surprising as it was one of the strongest hives and a good honey producer. It had obviously dwindled over the winter months and the dead bees were over the floor with the queen and her court dead on a frame. There were plenty of stores. We can only surmise that varroa and its related viruses took its toll as there were no obvious signs of nosema.

This winter there has been a rota of members who have looked after the apiary on a monthly basis. Thank you to all concerned for a job well done and some very detailed reports.

This is the most difficult time of year for the bees as the old bees need to raise the new brood before they die off, so take very great care and ensure they have plenty of stores to help them along. Ours have been piling the pollen in, the hazel catkins are really out.

The opening Saturday for the Apiary was 12th March when we started the Bailey change. The Beginners course commences on the 2nd April so it is time for all members to renew friendships and get the Apiary going again. If you have a hive in the Apiary, you must change the comb during March/April as a disease precaution.

Surrey Bee Day proved to be another very informative and interesting day. Ged Marshall highlighted the difference between us hobbyists pampering our bees and the short cuts the commercial beekeepers take. His description of how he raises 1000 queens per season from 300 hives was amazing. Richard Ball a retired Bee Inspector also gave some excellent tips on Bailey comb changes and obtaining good drawn comb.

Avis and David Marshall

The Committee

Derek Jones Chairman & SBKA
Divisional Representative

John Legate Trustee

Martin Kenny Secretary

Anne Jones Treasurer

Avis Marshall Apiary manager & training

David Marshall Apiary manager

Helen Turner Membership

Andy Watter Webmaster

Chris Reid

David Priest

Serena Fraser

Next issue of BeeNEWS

If you have any articles, news stories, photos which you would like to be included in the next issue please send to:

julie.hogarth@regentstreetdirect.com

mike@brandfoundry.co.uk

serena@thefrasers8.plus.com

Dear Kingston Beekeepers association



I am honoured to have been elected Chairman of Surrey Beekeepers Association at the recent AGM. Many of you won't know who I am so I thought I should introduce myself. However, first of all I must pay tribute to our outgoing President Mike Somers and to Tim Lovett, our previous Chairman and new President. Mike has served Surrey BKA well for many years and was instrumental in guiding us to our new constitution. He will be sorely missed and I know the SBKA Council members are grateful that he is still available for wise advice. Tim has also played a major role in modernising Surrey BKA and his role and influence on the national beekeeping stage is of great advantage to our association.

I have been keeping bees for about ten years. Currently I have five colonies at my home in Redhill. I am working my way through the BBKA examination system and I am very keen to encourage all our members to improve their skills. I have been Chairman of Reigate Beekeepers since 2005 and have now relinquished this role to concentrate on Surrey BKA. I joined the Surrey County Show committee in 2006 and became Show Committee Chairman in 2008. I am also on the Executive Committee of the National Honey Show. I have been a BBKA basic examiner since 2006 and I have been the Surrey delegate at the BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting for the past 4 years.

SBKA has an important administrative role. The trustees (one from every division plus the treasurer, secretary and chairman) are responsible for the proper management of our charity. SBKA officers are responsible for maintaining our membership of the British Beekeepers Association, BDI, subscriptions to Beecraft etc., We have a superb annual Surrey Bee Day and our County Show is (in my biased view!) a benchmark of excellence. However, I believe SBKA can deliver much more and my aim over the next few years will be to see how SBKA can aid the fantastic effort that is currently being made by every division.

I look forward to meeting as many members as I can in the course of the next season. I'm keen to find out what you would like Surrey BKA to do to help your division.

Bob Maurer

Chairman of Surrey Beekeepers Association

Tel: 07740 707500



Here's one I made earlier...



The bees very quickly get to work on the starter strips

Going Foundationless

Helen Turner

For bees, making their own comb is the most natural thing in the world. For the last 3 seasons I have used 'starter strips' rather than full frames of foundation, and let the bees do the rest. Foundation is made of recycled wax and more than likely contains a build up of chemical residues, which has been linked to drone sterility and queen supercedure. My view that this isn't good for the bees or for us.

An inch or so of foundation is secured into the top bar of a frame in the usual way and inserted into the hive between two fully drawn frames. This helps guide the bees into building a nice straight comb.

On a standard brood or super frame the bees draw the comb to fit the entire frame, securing it firmly around the edges. So much so you wouldn't tell it apart from normal foundation except for the beautiful pure white wax. On 14x12 frames the comb is a natural rounded shape not attached to the bottom bars so only try it on that size frame if you are prepared to handle them very carefully indeed!

Michael Bush (1) backs up my own findings "In my experience bees will draw their own comb faster than they will draw foundation."

As well as the benefit of lovely clean comb (which the queen prefers to lay in), the cell size is slightly smaller than standard foundation. This leaves less room for varroa to inhabit the cell and so it is another weapon in your IPM armoury. You can read more about Regression by following the links below (2).



Homegrown wax

Beekeepers have a reputation for being a thrifty bunch, so why not save a few pennies and give some starter strips a go?

Further reading:

- 1) <http://www.bushfarms.com/bees.htm>
- 2) <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/cellsizes.html>



Nucs for sale

Farnham and Weybridge member Alastair Welch has a number of nuc's for sale. They are five-frame nuc's set up on a National basis, three of brood in various stages, two of stores, marked queen and adhering bees and come provided with a free issue travel box, collection being from Hindhead, Surrey. They are priced at £160 each and availability is late May. If a group of you are interested in putting together a joint order (Alastair says around ten nucs) he is prepared to offer them at £150 each.

Contact Alastair Welch on 01428 607343 or by email surreybees@aol.com

New Frames

New frames for the apiary hives only are now available in the shed. If you are in charge of one of the apiary hives please get on with making up the brood frames in time to do the Bailey Change.

BBKA exams!

The exam dates are confirmed April 3rd and 4th!

Summer Fair at Hollymount School West Wimbledon

If you would like to book a stall at this Summer Fair to be held on 2nd July contact Monica Ni Cheallaigh Tel. 07786 431514

The three R's Routine, Records and Writing!

Start the new season as you mean to go on –

Keep accurate hive records – day and date – it is all about timings when it comes to eggs, queens, mating, and you will kick yourself if you cannot remember what you did or saw on exactly which day.

It helps to keep a calendar card with your hive record. Circle the date you inspect your hive, it gives a quick visual check on the frequency of inspections and helps you if you have to calculate when to expect a change in the hive after a manipulation.

So start a new record card per hive, create your own shorthand for your notes, have a veterinary admin record per hive (needs to be kept for 5 yrs) and eventually add your honey production and lot numbers. So if ever you are challenged over your honey you can trace it back to the hive or hives it came from and the history of that hive.

It is a good idea to create routine to your inspections, lighting your smoker first, gets it going by the time you are dressed. Checking your clothing – are you fully protected. Do you have a soda crystal bucket, clean hive tool, clean footwear and clean clothing – to prevent you taking any disease from one apiary site to another. By now your smoker should be ready to use, check the temp of the smoke.....

Next check your records so you know what to expect from this hive. Have you got to hand all the equipment you might need, syrup, feeder, another super... and so on.....

Inspect the hive and at the end write up your records before going onto another hive. Make a note of what to expect next time and if you think you will need any special equipment. (no point in finding they need feeding and the syrup is back at home.....)

So routine, records and writing.



Surrey Bee Day 2011 Saturday 26 February

If you missed this you missed a treat! Tim Lovett organised a diverse group of speakers and Sandra Rickwood made sure the day (which was a sell out) ran like clockwork. Ged Marshall gave us an excellent down to earth account of queen rearing. Ged is a bee farmer and reckons to produce 10 tons of honey and 1,000 queens a year. A little more than most of us! However, he was able to explain how his methods can be adapted for those of us working on a smaller scale. Richard Ball, who was the National Bee Inspector and now works as an Extension Officer for the NBU, discussed the importance of having a stock of drawn comb and suggested ways of achieving this. David Baldock, the author of two books on bees and wasps in Surrey, gave us an interesting talk backed up by superb pictures from his books. Everyone enjoyed a two course lunch, even though the caterer had to cook with gas cylinders as the main supply had failed!

Ged Marshall made the comment that when he looks for potential breeder queens he may find only three or four potential candidates out of 250 to 300 colonies. That would be impossible for any of us to achieve by ourselves; but there are over 800 of us in Surrey – think what we could do if we pooled our resources. Several counties have a queen rearing scheme. If there's enough interest I would be delighted to see if we can set something up.

So keep an eye on your division's calendar and make a date for the Surrey Bee Day 2012.

Bob Maurer



Bees for development

Bees for Development Trust is an international development organisation based in Monmouth, South Wales. Bees for Development works to alleviate poverty in the developing world through the promotion of sustainable beekeeping. The Trust achieves this by:

- Working to raise the profile of beekeeping, with emphasis on the alleviation of poverty, and encouragement of a wider, sustainable economy.
- Always using local resources, building on people's skills.
- Providing materials for trainers to support community beekeeping activities.
- Answering enquiries from individual beekeepers, projects, honey traders, government institutions, NGOs and organisations worldwide.
- Always encouraging sustainable beekeeping and sharing good examples throughout the developing world.

More information at: info@beesfordevelopment.org and www.beesfordevelopment.org or phone 01600 713648.

Trust Patron and beekeeper, Martha Kearney presented an appeal on behalf of Bees for Development with the heart-warming story of Prosper Agbeti, from Ghana, whose life was transformed by bees and beekeeping after she attended a free course taught with materials developed and provided by Bees for Development. Broadcast on Sunday 6 March

The BBC Radio 4 Appeal is a weekly programme highlighting the work of a charity and appealing for donations to support its work.



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH!

Serena Fraser



Or is there.....

Question. 38,000 creatures confined in one place – any suggestions as to what and where?

Answer. No, not a beehive – but visitors to the Surrey Show in Guildford 2010 and at one point I am sure they were all in our Bee Keeping marquee, plus their dogs, buggies, stray children and lost grandparents.....Armed only with my one year of beekeeping and far too much enthusiasm than is good for me I found myself on the Surrey Show Committee (did the other Kingston members know something I didn't) I remember warnings of hard work, a long day, - but no one mentioned the pleasure you reap from seeing the general public becoming engrossed in the magical world of bees. Seeing people work out where the honey they eat actually comes from and how it is created. Their surprise when they learn of its use in medical dressings, that honey dating back to the Egyptians has been found preserved in the pyramids.



We had an impressive information section, supported by beekeepers who, as stewards, can talk bee business nonstop all day. The observation hives and displays of flying bees with a running commentary kept the public engaged.

In the depths of the marquee the hungry public moved on round to the good stuff – Taste of Honey. Could they discern the difference in taste, texture - could they identify what the bees had been munching on. Then came the BIG DECISION which pot or pots of honey to buy and take home – was it the one you tasted, the label you liked, the honey you thought came from where you live. Someone needs to explain the address on the pot is that of the beekeeper not necessarily the bees – we don't normally keep them in our homes! They could reside close by or they may be the nomadic type, oil seed rape field one moment,

**Stewards are
needed for
manning the
Honey Tent at the
Surrey County
Show see the
application form
on page 11**



garden flowers the next – the only thing we do know, is that all the honey comes from hives in Surrey and this is their chance to support local beekeepers.

Still there is so much more to do - fun things for the family, a chance to roll your own beeswax candle or try your luck at the straw draw with its hundreds of prizes, spend your money on lovely cosmetics, look more closely at a bee through a microscope or stand back and admire the Show Bench, which recognises the high level of professionalism maintained within the craft. I've already cleared my mantelpiece, ready for my winning cups this year – so watch out Surrey I've had my bees in training all winter - gourmet honey is about to arrive!

VACANCY

South of England show
secretary

I have had a letter from Dave Staples, Chairman of the Bees and Honey exhibit at the South of England Show asking for our help to find a new Show Secretary as, after many years loyal service, the current show secretary, Audrey Gill, has finally decided to pass on the baton.

Many Surrey members will have enjoyed the experience of stewarding at this excellent show. Even if you have never attended, please think about tackling this job. You do not need to be an experienced beekeeper. You just need to be an organised, calm and methodical person. Rest assured, Audrey Gill will give you all the help you need to hit the ground running. Dave Staples has prepared the attached 'job spec'.

If this sounds good to you,
please contact Dave Staples:

14 Northfield Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN13 1QW

01293 539205
Mobile 07594 552700



Oh yes that free lunch – well as a steward we get the most sumptuous lunch but it is very well deserved and we all go home absolutely exhausted but it is well worth it. So why not sign up as a steward this year or just bring the family along for a great day out. Thanks SBKA for the experience.



Stewards are needed for manning the Honey Tent at the Surrey County Show see the application form on page 11

Your Association needs you!

To get the SBKA marquee at the County Show off the ground requires a tremendous effort on the part of the SBKA Show Committee Members – and as KBKA representative I have committed us to the following: (which is very little compared to what all the others do)

Filling 100 1 oz pots with honey, 50 runny/50 set - prizes in the straw draw

Providing 400 scones for taste of honey

Providing 100 other prizes for the straw draw.

Can be small packet of fudge, small wax candle, little cake decorated, packet of biscuits, block of wax or anything related to bees. It is mainly children who enter this but also some adults- the prize should have a notional value of 25p(ish)

I have the pots/labels for the honey, the recipe for the fudge, the little plastic bags for the prizes to be packed into. Any real costs can be reclaimed, however, what I do not have is the time to do all this myself plus all the other things that I have agreed to. (Help mild panic sets in) so if anyone can volunteer to help out in early/mid MAY can you let me know now.

Martin and I will be at the show Sunday afternoon setting up and all day Monday. We will act as mules, taking your show bench entries to Guildford – (collect at apiary on Saturday/return following Saturday) If you enter enough items you can actually get a free ticket to the show and it is cheaper to buy your tickets prior to the day. If anyone wishes to sell their honey at the show can you check with Rob Chisholm (robinchisholm102@btinternet.com) he may have a minimum quantity. Again Martin and I should be able to act as mules on your behalf but this will depend on quantity as I have the PA system in my car.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that the show does make a profit from all this tremendous effort. At the moment we are considering spending some of the money in creating better quality information and promotional material that will be available to all divisions to use at their various promotional events. This should save each division the expense and the time in trying to create/provide/store the type and quality of materials expected today. We are still at the early stages but would hope to have something available by 2012. Education and training are all part of our remit which enable us to run as a charity.

Plus something like 38,000 people visit the show – many if not all visit our marquee – they come away knowing more about the importance of the honey bee and perhaps a pot of honey.

Bank Holiday Mon 30th May – Guildford Show Grounds

**COME ON
KINGSTON
THOSE CUPS
CAN'T KEEP
RETURNING
TO FARNHAM
GUILDFORD
REIGATE
WEYBRIDGE
EPSOM AND
CROYDON**

SBKA – Surrey Beekeepers Association.

Get this date in your diary now!

This is the day when Surrey Beekeepers get the opportunity to explain their craft to the general public and as a member of Surrey you are invited to support the event.

We need 45 stewards who work for half the day and can spend the other half exploring this enormous county event. See Form attached at end of newsletter - send it off now as places go fast - includes free lunch and entry to the whole show.

Otherwise come down for the day, bring your family and enjoy the whole show, see event website for ticket prices.

You can also take part by entering your products on the show bench. Very soon I will be circulating to you the details of the entry classes. The main event is obviously the honey, but we also have honey CAKES & BISCUITS, CANDLES, WAX MOULDS, SECTIONS OF COMB, MEAD and a whole section on PHOTOGRAPHY and lastly something to do with interesting items related to BEES.

If you are thinking of entering something for the show I will soon have the SCHEDULE OF CLASSES available – this tells you everything you need to know but please note you need to have sent off your entry form by end of April. I will take your entry to the show on the day and bring it home with me afterwards plus all your PRIZE MONEY, CUPS AND AWARDS. Yes there are enormous silver cups, cut crystal and monetary prizes to be had!

If anyone wants to enter an item and is baffled by all the instructions I will find us some experts to come and help us prepare our entries.

After the Surrey show you can then try entering the national honey show in Weybridge which is considered to be the leading honey show in the world! And there are many categories for “Surrey only” members so big chance of winning.

Schedule of Classes for the Surrey County Show

Serena now has the schedule so anyone wanting to show their honey, cakes, biscuits, photos, candles, wax, cut comb, mead, or an instructive exhibit please get a schedule off Serena as must enter by 29th April to be included in the Show Catalogue.

There is a wonderful trophy for the winner of the novice class for just one pot of honey.

Surrey Beekeepers Association at the Surrey County Show

Monday 30 May

Stewards are needed for manning the Honey Tent at the Surrey County Show,

Stoke Park, Guildford. If you would like to be a steward and are willing to commit the time, please complete the following form and return to.

Mrs Anne Buckingham,
29, Aveley Lane, Farnham,
GU9 8PR
by 1st May please

email
info@farnhambeekeepers.
org.uk

Please, do not assume I shall know you are intending to be there (apart from the committee!).

Name.....

Division of SBKA.....

Address.....

.....

Tel no.....

email.....

Do you need an Entry Badge? Yes/No
(probably not if you have entries in the show)

Would you like a salad lunch (free of charge) Yes/No

If you would like vegetarian, please state

Do you have a preference for:

AM 8.30am - 1.00pm followed by lunch
12.00 lunch and clearing up

PM 1.00pm - 6.00pm Either/Both

*****After any event, clearing-up has to be done.**

The more people who help, the quicker it is. Please consider volunteering for the pm shift and helping to clear up.

Would you be willing to take a turn in handling the bees (not speaking about them) in a demonstration? Yes /No

If so, please bring suit/veil etc, but NOT gauntlets.

If you do not hear from me before either collecting or receiving you badge, please assume you are stewarding at the time you requested.
please bring your own mug or cup.

Entrance badges will be sent during the second week in May, together with appointed times. The security is now much tighter and you will not be able to get onto the ground from the previous Friday, without a badge. We shall be setting up the tent the day before (2.00pm start in old clothes!). The number of badges is limited and expensive so if you are unable to attend the show, please let me know and, if possible, return the badge.

Anne Buckingham Show Secretary 01252 714069
email info@farnhambeekeepers.org.uk



SBKA

Surrey Beekeepers Association



TRAINING DAY

BEEKEEPING HUSBANDRY

By Alan Byham, Regional Bee Inspector

This event welcomes all SBKA members

(Croydon, Epsom, Farnham, Guildford, Kingston, Reigate, Weybridge and Wimbledon)
Plus our neighbouring associations (Twickenham, Sussex, London, Kent etc.)

Friday 3 June 2011, 9.45am – 4.00pm

**Holy Trinity Church, Church Road, Claygate
Surrey KT10 0JP**

To secure your place please send £8 (cheques payable to Surrey Beekeepers Assoc.). Also include email/address/contact telephone number and your division details to Serena Fraser, 8 Claremont Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0PL.

No tickets will be issued, but confirmation will be sent out by email/phone. If you have any queries concerning the course please contact Serena, preferably by email serena@thefrasers8.plus.com otherwise phone 01372 464885.

We have a limited number of places to offer so please contact us as soon as you are able. This is a county event so profits go into providing us with further training events/speakers.

Claygate is on bus route K3, trains on the Waterloo to Guildford via Cobham (interchange at Wimbledon, Surbiton, Effingham Junction). Plenty of local parking with a short walk to the hall. Let Serena know if you have any transport problems. Suggest you bring own packed lunch. There is a pub 2 minutes away but lunch break will be limited. There will be tea/coffee and biscuits.