

# Surrey Beekeepers Association

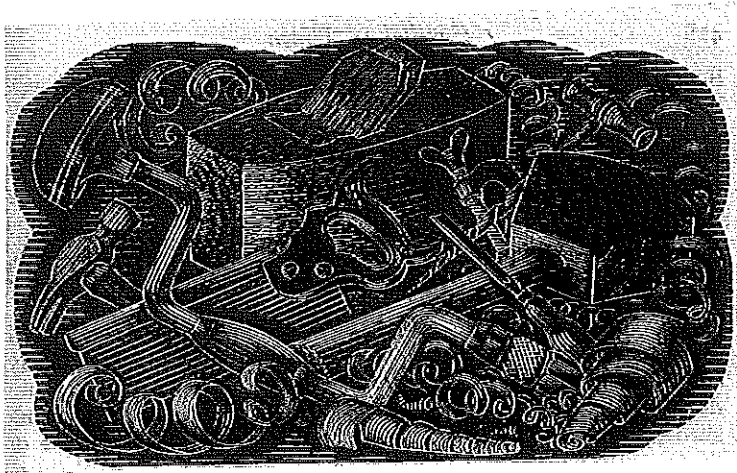
## CROYDON DIVISION

Chairman Mark Stott 0208 684 1098  
Treasurer Tamar Cavett 0208 406 9258  
Secretary Joyce Atkinson 0208 657 2817

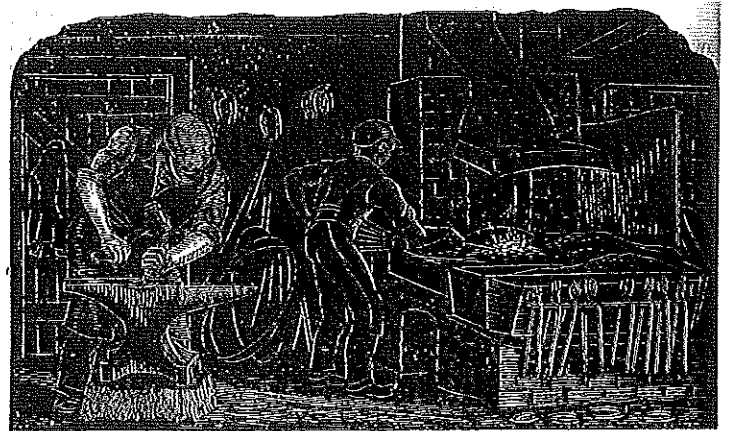
[www.croydonbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.croydonbeekeepers.co.uk)



MARCH 2011



Two more of the wood cuts from 'Lark Rise to Candleford', they are not in the same order as the chapters



If you have not received your BDI insurance certificate please contact our treasurer, Tamar Cavett

### COMING MEETINGS and EVENTS

FRIDAY 18 th. MARCH

A talk by Pam Hunter  
'Bees and the Garden'

7-30 p.m. at Warlingham Methodist Church Hall  
WARLINGHAM, CR6 9HA  
A small charge to cover costs and refreshments.

SUNDAY 13 th. MARCH

HARTLEY DOWN APIARY TIDY UP DAY

All are welcome to come and assist, either morning at 10 a.m. or afternoon at 2 p.m. with preparing the site and equipment ready for the Sunday meetings next month. Tea or coffee provided but bring your own snack

SATURDAY 19 th. MARCH

BEEKEEPING TRAINING DAY

An all day event at Crawley,  
details were in the January newsletter,

## SATURDAY 2 nd. APRIL

The Central Association of Bee-Keepers Spring Meeting.  
10-30 am. till 4-30 pm. at Roots and Shoots, The Vauxhall Centre, Walnut Tree Walk,  
Lambeth, SE11 6DN

All are welcome, free, Lecture Programme and AGM  
A Mediterranean lunch and desert are extra, £6-00 per head, must be prebooked by the 28 th.  
March, contact Ms. Pat Allen 01708 220897 or pat.allan@btconnect.com

## SATURDAY 2 nd. APRIL

Auction of bees and equipment at Mickleham, Surrey  
See the Riegate beekeepers website for details <http://www.riegatebeekeepers.org.uk>

## THURSDAY 28 th. APRIL

An all day opportunity to find out about the Foul Brood Diseases and what to look out for with  
Alan Byham, our local bee inspector, full details next month, or Mark Stott can let you know.

## SATURDAY 30 th. APRIL

Auction of bees and equipment at Pulborough, West Sussex.  
For details see the WSBKA website at [www.britishtbee.org.uk/local/westsussex/auction](http://www.britishtbee.org.uk/local/westsussex/auction)

## APIARY MEETINGS

These will start next month, as usual the second and fourth Sundays, the 10 th. and 24 th.  
of April at 2-30 pm.

As we now have more beginners at the apiary meetings there are extra  
demonstrators required so, if you can help please let Mark Stott know  
so that this may be covered besides the usual hive work.

## EQUIPMENT

The active season is nearly upon us so make sure you are ready, your bees are not short  
of stores and you have every thing you will need ready, Richard Palmer, our local agent for  
Thornes can supply anything that you have not to hand, 0208 679 0401  
or palmersbees@hotmail.co.uk.

## SURREY BEEKEEPING HISTORY

Last month I put in a note about the vacancy for an archivist as Pete Ashley is resigning  
from this post but omitted to print the note about the duties and work involved, no one, it  
seems noticed, but in case one of you is interested in this job here it is:

### SBKA Archivist

The role of the archivist is to prepare and archive documentation relating to the Surrey Beekeepers  
Association. This will include signed minutes of council and general meetings, both annual and  
extraordinary, and the Treasurer's reports. These documents and any other legal or pertinent  
papers, photographs or certificates are scanned prior to being lodged with the Surrey County Council  
History Centre in Woking. There are two key aspects to this role. Firstly, the preparation of the  
documents prior to their being archived in acid free folders and secondly to maintain a record of  
what has been lodged with the SCC History centre. From time to time, requests are made to the  
archivist to search the archive. A detailed task list is available together with instructions on how to  
process documents.

A volunteer for this role will need to have a computer, a scanner and internet access. Storage space  
amounting to two 90cm long shelves would be needed. It is estimated four hours per month should  
be sufficient time to fulfil this important, behind the scenes role. Expenses will be reimbursed by the  
SBKA.

## REPORT on the 6th. SURREY BEE DAY by Richard Snelling

The day was packed out and several other Croydon members attended besides myself, all acclaimed that it was a resounding success. For those who have not attended one of these events it cannot be recommended strongly enough, the cost of £18-00p covers four excellent sessions by eminent speakers, a substantial lunch, tea or coffee with cakes, morning and afternoon, concluding with a raffle and brains trust panelled by the days speakers. Beecraft and the Surrey Archivist ran stands there too.

Ged Marshall, a commercial beekeeper who runs some 300 hives, 200 for honey and 100 for queen rearing, produces around 10 tons of honey and about 1,000 queens a year. Based in Buckinghamshire he is heavily into migratory beekeeping between Kent and Yorkshire for pollination contracts or honey.

In his morning session Ged took us through his way of queen rearing and how it can be successfully applied to back garden beekeeping, originally he bred from Buckfast bees but has switched to Danish bees. He stressed ruthless culling of poor queens, that their rearing is an art rather than a science and does not always go to plan; weather can be critical. Larva one to three days old are best, the younger the better and are much more likely to be accepted than eggs in a queenless colony/nuke. Strong colonies and regular feeding are helpful with most queen rearing methods. When bees are swarming naturally is the best time, June, but changing weather patterns are bringing it forward. If you are apprehensive about grafting a strip of comb with young larva can be used suspended in the colony with cells facing down. Wrinkly queen cells surrounded by brace comb indicate good feeding and may produce better queens. In Ged's opinion 50 colonies left to themselves might produce one good queen. It is essential to read up the subject and the Devon Beekeepers Guide is recommended. On average 5 to 15 days between queen emergence and egg laying. Mini nukes require far fewer bees but much more intensive effort with feeding critical.

The second morning session was by Richard Ball, a National Bee Officer employed by FERA who discussed the importance of clean, well drawn comb and ways of obtaining this. Unsurprisingly he stressed the importance of keeping healthy bees, raising the standard of husbandry and would aim to have two year old comb, no older, so as to remove disease pathogens, damaged frames and comb, unusable stores and pollen so creating more space for brood. Use of brood boxes for supering is a good way of achieving this, well worth the effort to get drawn comb for the following season. Richard discussed at length the use of shook swarming and 'bailey' comb changing and stressed that these can dramatically increase crops without setting back colonies greatly and be more effective than antibiotic use. He also outlined the various methods of swarm control. He said never to use castelated runners in the brood chamber. Foundation loses essential oils during storage, he told us, and may be revived by warmth e.g. in a green house, then placed above a strong colony.

Ged Marshall returned for the first afternoon session to tell us of his bee farming and need to have a system and be able to 'read' a colony speedily guided by generalisations for both honey production and queen raising. His philosophy is that one does not make money by spending it so the enterprise is run by himself, full time, his wife and daughter part time with a student some times like extraction. Briefly he mentioned that hornets are on the increase, woodpeckers are a menace, their holes allowing mice to invade; chicken wire is the easiest way to protect hives. He does not use mouse guards but narrow entrances, only feeds light colonies using bakers fondant purchased in bulk, that speedy comb drawing can be an indication of swarming which may be delayed by giving more space and moving frames to achieve this. He is a firm believer in the use of bait hives that have a couple of old brood combs, and he clears supers with a leaf blower. To operate on his scale it is essential to have gentle bees with good queens that he has bred himself and he will move heaven and earth to get borage honey which he

rates very highly. The best hives go to the heather for stores and hopefully a surplus, supers are cleared and away by the end of August when varroa treatment begins. An aside he made was that eggs exposed to direct sunlight for just 30 seconds desiccate and die. It was clear that there is juxtaposition between the practices described earlier by the Ministry and the bee farmer. Diplomatically the Bee Officer thought that their methods were not far apart and that the bee farmer could rely to a great extent on his knowledge and experience.

The final session was presented by David Baldock and the photographer Jeremy Early of the Surrey Wildlife Trust. Surrey is the richest county in the U.K. for insects and 80% of all known U.K. bees may be found in our county. After a short comparison of honey, solitary and bumble bees, wasps too, we were treated to a breathtaking display of slides of them and their cuckoos of which there seemed to be as many. We were told about the special features of the insects, their habitats and how to encourage them in our gardens. The photographers amongst us were let into the secrets of how the pictures (the real stars of the session) were taken. It was a really uplifting end to the formal sessions of the day as we could just sit back and marvel at these insects we know so little about.

The icing on the cake for this reviewer was that he won the first prize of the raffle and chose the book 'Worth Dying For' by Lee Child.

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## Towards personalised nutrition

Research is under way to develop an "experimental kitchen" in which devices will link personal nutrition and home refrigerators with supermarket shelves to help people improve their diet.

According to Mike Gibney (director, Institute of Food and Health, University College Dublin), speaking at a food science meeting in Dublin in November, these devices will be able to evaluate what comes out of your fridge and give you recipe options. However, the future of personalised nutrition was more likely to lie with "clusters of individuals" with similar genetic make-up rather than individuals since manufacturers could find it uneconomic to produce foods formulated for one person alone.

Although individual DNA sequence variations, known as single-nucleotide polymorphisms

(SNPs), might allow researchers to understand diet and gene interactions with metabolism, given the large numbers of SNPs, definitive dietary advice based on single SNPs was not possible. But Professor Gibney said that it might be possible for such data to be related to the information technology services offered by supermarkets.

A second rapidly emerging area, he added, was the provision of personalised data based on phenotypes. These data could be used to advise individuals on their personal nutritional status and ultimately their food choice. People could wear electronic biofeedback devices that would measure factors such as blood pressure and allow them to adapt their lifestyles, exercise and dietary intakes as required to maintain their health.

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## Pros and cons of dirt and health

Exposure to dirt is an inevitable part of life, yet in modern times we have an increasing obsession with cleanliness. There is ongoing debate whether this obsession and reduced exposure to infection increases the risk of conditions such as allergy and asthma.

Living in the country I am particularly interested in studies showing that being raised in a farm environment has a protective effect against hay fever and atopic eczema. Reduced risk of asthma has also been related to a childhood spent on a farm, particularly with exposure to silage, hay making, spending time in animal sheds and pig keeping.

In relation to the subject of cleanliness, I was interested to read of a new exhibition on the history of "dirt" that will appear at the Wellcome Collection in London from 24 March until the

end of August this year. The exhibition introduces six different places as a starting point for exploring attitudes towards dirt and cleanliness: a home in 17th century Delft in Holland; a street in Victorian London; a hospital in Glasgow in the 1860s; a museum in Dresden in the early 20th century; a community in present-day New Delhi; and a New York landfill site in 2030. It explores the 17th century Dutch obsession with cleanliness and Joseph Lister's regime of cleanliness that transformed hospitals. But it also shows how hygiene took a darker turn in Dresden, where the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum was co-opted into the ideological horrors of racial purity and ethnic cleansing by the Nazis. And, as the studies on farms indicate, not everything linked with dirt in the urban mind is harmful.

These articles were passed to me by Colin Whitfield.

Only those of you without an E mail address will receive newsletters by post from now, unless there some item which needs to be sent out to members. Please let me know if you fail to obtain it electronically.