

JUNE 2012

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



WASHDAY - another of the wood cuts from 'Lark Rise to Candleford' - a reminder to keep your bee suit and equipment clean as a help to prevent the spread of diseases.

MONDAY 4 th. JUNE

SURREY COUNTY SHOW - GUILDFORD

SUNDAY 10 th. JUNE

APIARY MEETING

Apiary meeting at Hartley Down - 2-00 p.m. for those following David Shepherd's introductory talks with slides and 2-30 p.m. for the usual hive inspections then tea with cake.

SATURDAY 16 th. JUNE

CROYDON GREEN FAIR

An all day event at North End, Croydon - lots to see - we will have a stand there with an observation hive and honey for sale.
If you are able to help man our stand for a few hours on the day please let one of the committee know.

SUNDAY 24 th. JUNE

APIARY MEETING

The second this month continuing our usual programme..

REMEMBER !

If you need any frames, foundation or other things for your bees
Richard Palmer can help - 0208 679 0401

A note about the delivery of your Newsletter

Some time ago we sought members' preferences as to whether they would like to receive the newsletter by email or by post.

At that time, most preferred email, but about 30% of the members opted to continue by post.

Because of the frequent and high increases in the cost of postage, we are having to look at the situation again. After the forthcoming rise in the price of second class stamps (up to 50p on 30th April) the cost of printing, 'enveloping' and posting a six-page newsletter will be just over 70p, a total of about £9.00 per year – significantly more than is available to the Division from the members' annual subscription, and possibly warranting an extra payment by those members who opt for posting.

As from the June Newsletter, all those whose email addresses we have will be sent their newsletter electronically, unless we hear to the contrary. If you use email, but have not notified us of the address (ie if it is not on the recently distributed Contacts List), please tell us.

Having written the above, I have to say that I am a Luddite – or perhaps a Neo-Luddite, to be more precise, and much prefer to receive mail by post. I am fearful that the newsletter will disappear among the apparently infinite (and increasing-to-greater-than-infinity) number of emails that even private individuals receive per minute. Please prove me wrong! – Ed.

This was sent with Weybridge Division's May newsletter but applies to all - your editor shares their's, another Luddite!

Creating a buzz for honey

Food writer Tracy Carroll gets the buzz for home-grown honey...

Local honey is in big demand. Shop owners tell me customers place orders weeks ahead of supplies being ready.

This set me thinking. We hear a lot about "grow your own" when it comes to crops. So why not "grow your own" honey?

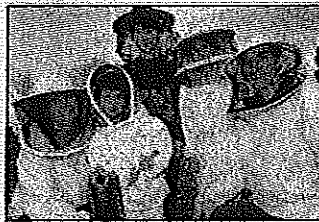
Having read about how easy it is to keep bees, I decide to find out more. Imagine my delight when the Hobbs family, who live in beautiful countryside just outside Reigate, invite me to their home to see their eight hives, which house nearly half a million bees.

I visit Stuart and Lorraine Hobbs and their three young children on a balmy evening. We talk in the garden as hens cluck, birds sing and bees buzz.

I'm interested to find out whether, as a beekeeper, I should be prepared to deal with a swarm.

"Definitely," replies Stuart, shooting a concerned look at a nearby tree. I follow his gaze to see a mass of bees clinging to a branch. A swarm. Whether these are his bees, or visitors, Stuart cannot yet tell.

As we take a closer look, the



Lorraine, Hugo (3), Monty (10), Tabitha (7) and Stuart Hobbs

Photo by Jon Rigby for the British Beekeepers Association

Hobbs assure me that bees are at their most docile when they swarm, having enjoyed a good feed first. Stuart explains how he will gently shake them into a box before transferring to a hive. You need to know what you're doing, of course.

Friendly

The Hobbs attend their friendly local beekeeping club and have been trained at the club apiary, something they heartily recommend to anyone considering keeping bees.

A beekeeper doesn't need a big plot of land, but it's worth introducing plants that provide rich food, such as clover. Water is essential – a container is fine as long as it's safe for the bees to drink from without falling in.

"You can keep bees in an ordinary sized garden," Lorraine confirms, "but you have to be

careful if you are near a school or a public footpath. You need to be responsible." She adds that many farmers are happy to have hives sited on their land in return for a few jars of honey.

Regular hive inspections are a must and help prevent swarms, which are part of the bees' propagation process. Beekeepers must also be on the lookout for early signs of disease. At this time of year, when the bees are active, it takes the Hobbs around three hours a week to check all their hives.

The Hobbs' honey will be ready soon. The average harvest from each hive is 30lb, but last year one produced an astonishing 150lb, a testament to good bee management and a thriving colony.

The family is participating in the Adopt A Beehive scheme Run by the British Beekeepers Association. It costs £29.50 per year and the money raised supports research into honey bee health and education programmes for beekeepers. This makes a great present and includes a goody bag and regular newsletter about your adopted hive.

■ Look out for Hobbs Honey at Horley Market and Reigate Farmers Market from the end of August

Find out more about Adopt A Beehive at www.BritishBee.org.uk.

Please send your questions and queries to the editors (contact details on last page) and we will seek out an answer or explanation to publish in a future issue.

Question - What is the Best Way to Deal with a Bee Sting?

Many old fashion remedies for bee stings, which are acidic, are known to all, and often practiced with some success. But the best course of action is to understand the type of reaction that occurs with the particular individual who has been stung, and then take the appropriate proven action.

Most stings are harmless, and a normal part of beekeeping. The reaction is a local sensation, possibly with some slight swelling, which causes mild to medium discomfort. Often the worse part is the itching that occurs when the sting is well on the way to recovery.

Ensure that you remove both the sting and venom sack, by pulling it out with your fingers or scraping with your finger nail, as quickly as possible to stop further venom being pumped in to the body.

Wash the sting area with clean water, and consider applying an antiseptic cream or antibacterial ointment to prevent infection. Pain killers such as ibuprofen, which is also anti-inflammatory may be beneficial, together with ice packs to reduce the swelling.

Depending on which part of the body that is stung, the more serious is the discomfort and the need for action. Bees often like to burrow into your hair, and as a result stings to the head are not uncommon. Stings to the head and facial area may require medical attention.

Histamine occurs both in the bee venom and is released by the body when you are stung – this causes inflammation and serves to increase the spread of the venom. So taking antihistamine tablets can help. If you know you are sensitive to bee stings, take one an hour before visiting the apiary, so that it has time to get into your system.

In general, the more often you are stung, the less your reaction will be, however, sensitivity to bee stings can increase with time, and may

lead to systemic reactions. These reactions usually occur within a few minutes of the sting, and have symptoms which can include chest wheezing, faintness, abdominal pains, nausea and vomiting. If this occurs it is recommended that the person sees a GP or Allergy Specialist asap and seeks a RAST (radioallergosorbent) test so that appropriate medical advice can be given. This may include the use of an antihistamine cream such as Benadryl, or in extreme cases injected adrenalin.

These systemic reactions are different to the far more serious Anaphylaxis shock reaction, which also has the symptoms of nausea, chest wheezing, vomiting, but is often accompanied by confusion and a 'sense of doom', with falling blood pressure which can lead to unconsciousness.

In the case of Anaphylaxis reaction take very rapid action. Move the person away from the source of stinging, dial 999 and request emergency assistance, and if available consider the use of such as an EpiPen, which is an automatic injection device containing epinephrine for allergic emergencies. But be careful the use of the EpiPen requires administration by a knowledgeable person – and the permission of the person you are injecting !!

Help is also on hand in the form of Pharmalgen which is going to be available on the NHS. This is a drug which given as a series of injections will de-sensitise someone, so that their immune system can tolerate bee venom.

It is always a good idea to take your mobile phone with in case of emergencies, especially if you are visiting an out apiary. Honey bees only sting if we upset them, so treat them with care, but always be prepared for the mistakes that you will make.

Graham Pooley



DIY Suggestions & Tips

More than an Eke

An eke is only four strips of wood nailed together to form a square the same size as your hive box, so simple!

The standard eke which is usually only 1.5" (37 mm) deep and is useful for feeding Apiguard. But if it is made deeper an eke can be used for lots of other useful applications. Such as feeding cappings in a tray back to the bees; cleaning old comb; housing a rapid feeder; and it can even convert a super into a brood box to house a swarm or create a nuc box, or convert from a standard to a deep 14"x12" brood box.

Some beekeepers even place an eke with vent holes in the sides, above their crown board to increase ventilation. An eke also makes a good stand on which to place brood boxes, and prevent swishing any bees whilst inspecting your hive.

A commercially supplied eke costs in the region of £6.25, but a more useful deeper eke can be made for free from recycled timber, such as old pallet strips.



BeeNews DIY Suggestion

Make your own ekes to extend your equipment.

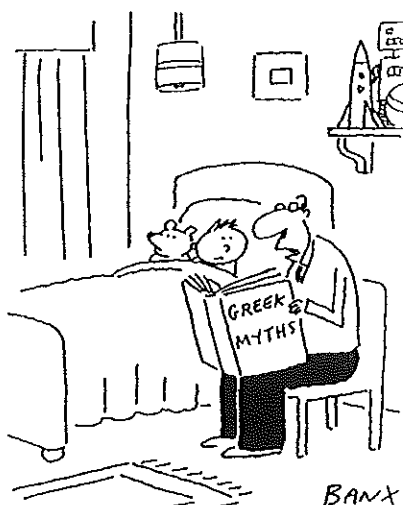
A 75 mm deep eke is particularly useful because it will convert a 150 mm deep super to the exact 225 mm depth of a brood box. For a National box 18 mm thick timber is ideal, and you will require two strips 460 mm long and two strips 424 mm long.

When using an eke to extend a super or brood box, a simple idea to securely attach them is to fix a couple of nails to the wall of opposite sides of the eke and the box, then wind a couple of turns of wire around the nails.

Did you know that the word eke originates from 'to eke out' or stretch your resources, and was also the name given to a straw ring that was used to extend the cap on top of a straw skep, where the bees would store honey in olden days.

....adapted from notes and idea by **Dennis Chow**

These two items are from Reigate Division's February newsletter which ran to 16 pages!



'... and the EU got all its money paid back in full'



'Oh look, a Facebook page for everyone who lost money buying shares'