

DECEMBER 2011

Surrey Beekeepers Association

CROYDON DIVISION

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

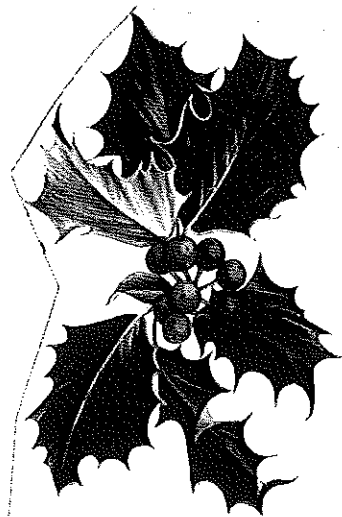
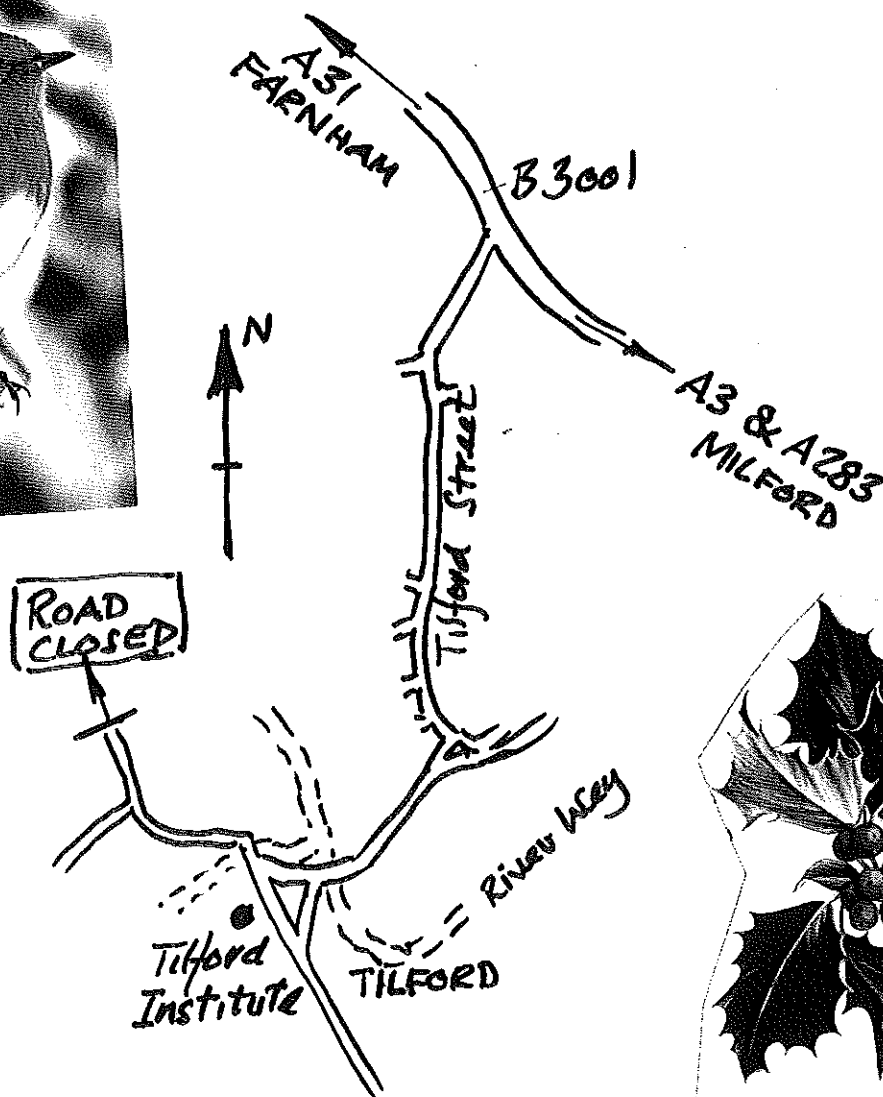
www.croydonbeekeepers.co.uk



Seasons Greetings.
Wishing you a Happy New Year.

DATE TO NOTE

SATURDAY 3rd. DECEMBER 2011 at 2-00 p.m.
133 rd. Annual General Meeting of Surrey Beekeeper's Association
at:
The Tilford Institute, Tilford, Farnham, GU10 2BU



BOOKS IN CROYDON DIVISION'S LIBRARY

- 1 The Beekeeper's Handbook - a Practical Manual of Bee Management
Owen Meyer, 1981, 253pp
- 2 Bees and Beekeeping (Cassell's Pet and Fancy Series No 12)
A V Pavord, 1975, 123pp
- 3 Teach Yourself Beekeeping (The EUP Teach Yourself Books)
Lt Col A Norman Schofield, 2 copies, 1947 & 1951, 151pp
- 4 Beekeeping Up-to-Date
Joseph Tinsley, 1945, 94pp
- 5 The World of the Honey Bee
Colin G Butler, 1959, 226pp
- 6 Candle Making (Leisure Crafts No27)
A Collings, D Constable & R Marr, 1971, 32pp
- 7 A Murmur of Bees (The first collection of verses, sayings, quotations and fables in
celebration of the honey bee)
Amoret Scott, 1980, 96pp
- 8 Discovering Beekeeping
Daphne More, 1988, 48pp
- 9 Practical Beekeeping
Herbert Mace & Karl Showler, 1977, 96pp
- 10 Backyard Beekeeping
William Scott, 1977, 122pp
- 11 Honey and Health
Dr Laurie Croft, 1987, 112pp
- 12 A Discourse or Historie of Bees (transcript of the 1637 edition and published by the
International Bee Research Association)
Richard Remnant, 1982, 34pp
- 13 Guide to Bees and Honey
Ted Hooper, 1976, 260pp
- 14 The Practical Bee Guide
Rev J G Digges, seventh edition, 1932, 320pp
- 15 Swarming - Its Control and Prevention
L E Snelgrove, eighth edition, 1945, 100pp
- 16 Beekeeping - Craft and Hobby
A R Cumming and Margaret Logan, 1950, 157pp
- 17 Bee-Craft Leaflets (a bound volume of 16 advisory leaflets and bulletins)
MAFF, c1960
- 18 Bees to the Heather
Stanley B Whitehead, 1954, 96pp
- 19 How To Make Beeswax Candles
Clara Furness, 14pp
- 20 Bees: Their Vision, Chemical Sense, and Language
Karl von Frisch, 1984, 125pp

If you would like to borrow any of these books, please give Terry Stephensmith a call on 01883 625196. Further books would be welcome. If you have any bee-related books that you would like to donate for the benefit of other members, please let Terry know.



SBKA - CROYDON DIVISION

MINUTES OF AGM MEETING held in the Scout Hut, Hillar's Heath Road, Coulsdon on 5th November 2011.

Copies of the Divisional Accounts were made available to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Penny Chew, Frank Castrique, Richard Palmer, Richard Snelling and Colin Whitfield. The minutes of last year's AGM had been circulated to the membership. The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Chairman's Report

Mark Stott listed the many successes within the Division. He handed out certificates to those members who had taken the Beginners Assessment and to those who had passed BBKA modules. He mentioned the regular self-help sessions held in a Purley pub. He thanked in particular John Ving for making equipment for the apiary, David Shepherd for teaching beginners at the apiary, John Collett for carrying out many small jobs in the background and Tamar Cavett for her sterling work in getting our books in order and for standing in as temporary Membership Secretary (Note: a post still available for any kind member to take on). The Division will look for volunteers to hold garden meetings next summer. Arrangements were in hand to run an SBKA Training Day based in Croydon next year. All Divisions had been asked to approve their new Rule Books before the next SBKA AGM. Put to the vote, the document was approved *nem. con.*

Secretary's Report

Joyce Atkinson noted that our Division had manned information stands at shows held by the Sanderstead Horticultural Assoc, Bramley Green Fair, Hamsey Green School, Friends of Selsdon Woods and Mondial Assistance. Sales of honey had not been as successful at some the newer venues but the introduction of candle making for the children had proved to be very popular. Joyce thanked David Shepherd for giving talks to many schools, cubs, the Woldingham Horticultural Society and two for the Rotary Club. Our Honey Show was successful with enough entries to enable the Blue Ribbon to be awarded. John Collett, Richard Snelling and new member Adam Dorman all went on to win prizes at the National Honey Show. Joyce suggested trying to get our Show Judge to give us a talk this winter on preparing exhibits for the show bench. Dates for the diary included SBKA's AGM at The Tilford Institute, Farnham on 3rd December 2011.

Treasurer's Report

Tamar Cavett gave a brief overview of the Division's finances and read out some notes prepared by our Auditor, Richard Snelling. The slight increase in our subscription rates, 15 more members, donations from solicitors and Waitrose, and proceeds from the sale of apiary honey had all helped to achieve a significant surplus, as against a small deficit last year. Due to the late date of our Honey Show, its expected loss had not been included in this year's accounts. In answer to a query from the floor, it was confirmed that Croydon Council had not raised the annual rent for our apiary site.

Apiary Report

David Shepherd gave a review of the apiary year. Beginner level talks had been given to the newer members at each meeting while intermediate level talks were aimed at the more experienced, using the BBKA Course-in-a-Case. Work to fence and major pruning of trees and shrubs had been carried out. One neighbour had requested leaving some fencing unrepaired so as to allow free access for the wild deer! David's wife had been a garden designer and he would ask her to prepare a planting plan for next season. Colonies had been well managed but some aggressive colonies and those with "follower" bees will need to be requeened. It was planned to raise some nucs for sale to new members. Colin Marshall suggested that we allow beginners to have free use of a colony for a year and if they renewed their membership they could buy the colony at a discount. In the long term, the main hut would need to be replaced, although it was confirmed that the asbestos cement panels were perfectly safe providing that they were not drilled or sawn. John Collett was thanked for holding an extraction meeting and Derek Read thanked for bottling the resulting 159lbs of honey.

Subscription Rates

Proposed increases to the subscription rates had been notified in the last Newsletter. SBKA had increased its capitation by £1 and the Division had increased rates by the same amount. The revised rates were agreed by the meeting *nem. con.*

Election of Officers and Committee

The Chairman read out the names of current committee members and Derek Read seconded Ron Head's proposal that they all be re-elected. This was agreed by the meeting *nem. con.*

AOB

Ron Head queried the receipt of both Bee Craft and BBKA Newsletter each with very similar content. Mark Stott described the national controversy concerning this matter and that we were obliged to take both. Colin Marshall's suggestion that we could save money by receiving Bee Craft electronically was not viable as we only obtained our discount on the paper copies.

The meeting joined David Shepherd in thanking Mark Stott, Joyce Atkinson and Colin Marshall for all their work for the club.

After an interval for tea and cakes, Pam Hunter gave a well-received, illustrated talk on The Vagaries of Bee Biology, quoting various authorities, from Virgil to Winnie the Pooh!

(Terry Stephensmith)

A FEW DATES TO NOTE FOR THE NEW YEAR

20TH

FRIDAY ~~20th~~ JANUARY 2012 at 7-30 p.m.

Products of the Hive, practical advice on their Production and Use

A talk by Michelle Taylor

at

Warlingham Methodist Church Hall, Limpsfield Road, Warlingham, CR6 9HA

SATURDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2012

'Training day'

Details, time and venue next month.

SATURDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2012

'Surrey Bee Day'

at

Ewell Castle School, Ewell.

Full details next month for this all day event

Advance bookings to Sandra Rickwood - 01932 244326

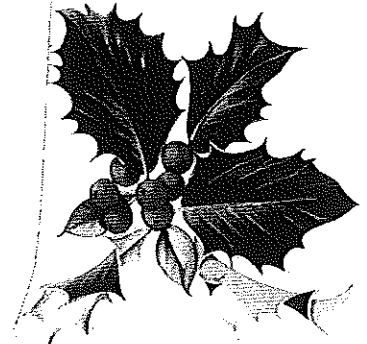
FRIDAY 23rd MARCH 2012

'Tips and Advice on Preparation for Honey Showing'

A talk by Peter Bashford

at

Warlingham Methodist Church Hall.



Croydon Divisional AGM

Following the meeting last month a copy of the Minutes are included with this and a copy of the Croydon Divisional Rule Book.

Also a letter from Michael Szilagyi who many members will remember and now lives in Austria

Societies and Associations which members may not be aware of

The CENTRAL ASSOCIATION of BEE-KEEPERS

An active group but as far as I know none of our members belongs; their meetings are held in the London area and they have a long list of booklets available.

CROYDON NATURAL HISTORY and SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

Also an active society covering a wide range of interests including ENTOMOLOGY

Let me know if you would like details of these.

When in England this spring I managed to meet up with old beekeeping friends at a talk in Warlinhgham, and I promised to write a few notes from this side of the water. It is now the latter half of October, and I must admit that it must be laziness, not lack of time that has made me delay so long.

It was nice to see the club strong in numbers, and not gone to the wall as I had predicted. I am sure the national and international increase in interest in all things bees, helped nearly as much as individual efforts to build up numbers. I wasn't able to visit the apiary this visit, but I saw it a number of times, as my train whizzed me to and from Gatwick, and things looked good, and a little extended from my last visit. In my days there was always a worry as to how many hives the apiary could support, and we kept only about a dozen colonies there. I don't know how many there are there now, possibly 15-20, with I am sure, no forage shortage. Here, there tends to be a greater stock density, with a much more limited forage range than in Croydon, but the bees still seem to do well.

Within a 3 mile diameter circle, we have 14 beekeepers, 4 apiaries, having about 20 stocks each, the rest having between 5-10 each, usually placed in a row, facing the same way, or in a bee house, one next to the other. The bees seem to find their way home without much noticeable drifting (stocks not offset in different directions). We still seem to have enough crop, even with all these bees in the area, which is surprising as we are in the country, and the only crop grown in this area is grass for cattle feed. In spite of this, I have still managed an average crop of 39 Kg of honey (best 53kg) (other beekeepers do better, I am still learning the local rhythm of the seasons). Selling the honey, is however a problem. In a village, everyone is either related to a beekeeper, or has known one for the last 30 years, so making inroads there is difficult. Luckily a town nearby has just started a weekly market, and I have managed to get a stall (no charge, even better) and I can shift about 20Kg of honey a day. To improve the sales, we (wife and I) offer clear, creamed, crystallised honey, chunk, cut comb and honey with cappings, honey with pollen, Amaretto or Cointreau, as well as Propolis tincture (Austrians love alternative medicine). Most of my sales go to tourists.

The local Carnica bees are much different to the mongrel UK bee. I have never had the pleasure of trying a UK pure bred queen from the British beekeepers association.

I bought my first 3 queens as pure bred from a local breeder for 60 euros each. They were calm and docile, and could be worked without a veil and just a little smoke, or a cloth with a couple of drops of clove oil on it. I have since bred my own and am probably 4-5 generations down the line. I now use a veil, but the bees are still fairly quiet. I must it brings a smile to my lips when I see a group of British beekeepers encased in white from head to knee, and then welly boots. I always work bare handed, and only occasionally get stung, even whilst removing honey crop. I breed each year from my gentlest and best producing queen, and any aggressive ones get the thumb treatment and requeening. The hives I work are called "standard" (aren't they all !!) and are slightly larger than the old BS National, with 10 frames. Because of the cold winters (to minus 20) the queen has a longish brood free period, but builds up quickly in the spring. We need to have full working colonies by dandelion time !! as all these fields of grass are full of dandelions and meadow flowers. Everyone works 2 brood chamber stocks many without a QX above, allowing the queen to continue laying upwards. I still use a QX above the second chamber, and believe me, they are both full of brood. My stocks are still on about 12-15 frames of brood now (mid July). In the UK I always had just 1 brood chamber. I am now feeding invert sugar syrup pre Varroa treatment with Apilife Var (etheric oils in a pad), and then a treatment when brood free in November, with a weak Oxalic acid solution which is applied via a thin pipette, onto the bees, between the frames, after the winter broodnest has formed. Drone brood culling in the spring is normal



practice, but I have yet to find Varroa in these frames, so I think from next year I won't bother. Everyone reports heavy Varroa drops this year. I have found overwintering on a single broodchamber leaves the bees short of food in the spring, even if packed full in the autumn, and 2 chambers are too much, as the frames get mouldy, so have gone to a 2 chamber with 8 frames in each, making sure the winter nest starts in the bottom chamber. I generally do my first inspection sometime in March, dependant on the weather, as we can have snow on the ground till then. We insulate the top of the hive, and ventilate only through the front entrance. No top ventilation. I think however that leaving the bottom completely open may be too cold for the bees here, although I used it quite successfully in the UK. Because of the cold here, the air is much drier in the winter. Many beekeepers give stimulative feeds in the spring, of honey and / or herb teas. I don't. Perhaps that is why they make more honey than I do.

Heather honey, as collected in the New Forest or Bisley, is unknown here, although it is collected in Germany. Lavender I have also not come across, so I was lucky to receive a few jars from David and Celia Rudland when I visited them in the spring. Thank you again Celia. "Wald honig" or Forest honey (honeydew collected from the fir trees) is very popular in this area, but I have been unable to collect (or identify it as such) in my hives, although I do enjoy trying to collect different types of honey, although it does take extra effort. For 3 years, after the spring crop, a friend and I took colonies up to 1600m (4800 feet a.s.l.) to try to get a special crop from Blueberry, Cranberry and Alpenrose. The first year we got a good crop, but the next two were disappointing, so we stopped.

Clubs over here don't have honey shows, as is usual in the UK, but they do have an agricultural show where you can take / send your honey to be tested and graded, but you can get 20 or 30 honeys getting a gold certificate. Hardly the same as a First at the Croydon show or National. I miss staying up till 3am the night before the show, trying to get the wax block just right!! Anyone who does not exhibit, try it. It is fun, and I am happy to see old experts like Frank, giving advice in the newsletter.

Austria's biggest industry is tourism, so a lot goes on to try and rip the Euros from the tourists pockets (sorry, to try and entertain the tourists). Many of these take the form of street festivals of one sort or another. This sort of thing would be impossible in England, with streets being closed off to traffic, beer wine and food being sold on the streets, musicians playing in the open, and games of skill and luck, just for fun, or prizes. A number of bee clubs/ divisions around the country have joined this movement, and hold honey festivals, the largest of which is in Hermagor. Have a look at their website at www.Honigfest.at . I am trying to get the local bee clubs and the local tourist board interested in putting on a similar fest next July at one of our local towns (where the weekly market is) We shall see if anything comes of it.

My bees are now (23 October) bedded down, and we have had a few cold nights and they should be clustered and all brood just about emerged, so the final treatment can continue, and I will wrap up the hives to protect them from the worst ravages of the winter weather. The rest will be in the lap of the gods till next spring

I will (? Perhaps) write another note over the winter. A summary of a Varroa handling procedure I haven't come across before, and would be interested in reactions from your side of the pond.

Wishing you all a good crop and happy bees.

Michael Szilagyi

Merry Christmas

GARDEN MEETINGS

We have not had even one this year, a pity, if you are prepared to host one next year please let one of the committee know..