

# Croydon Beekeepers Assoc. Newsletter

A division of Surrey  
Beekeepers Association

Founded 1879

May 2016

## Timing is everything

There's a line in a song which says: "She's always on time 'cause the girl's got rhythm" (Massive Attack?). It comes to mind because all the timing in my beekeeping life has gone awry: I've completely lost my rhythm due to a broken ankle just as the bees have decided to pick up the pace! And to anyone who thinks they can just wrap a plastic bag around their plaster cast and do an artificial swarm while using crutches, believe me, it doesn't work!

I hope you are all having better success. Colonies are rapidly expanding and there is forage at last. David Shepherd has written an interesting piece for this newsletter about the value of



**CROYDON  
BEEKEEPERS**

'weeds' to our bees, a timely reminder and an issue that every garden centre in the land should publicise.

We have six candidates taking the BBKA Basic Assessment on 3 June and I am sure you will join me in wishing them the best of luck.

Best wishes and take good care of your ankles!

Tracey

Chairman: Mark Stott  
Secretary: Joyce Atkinson  
Treasurer: Tamar Devane  
Editor: Tracey Carter



## Dates for your diary



20-21 May: NDB course, Reigate  
BKA apiary

21 May: General Husbandry  
Practical Assessment Training  
Course, Wimbledon BKA apiary  
(Morden Hall)

9-11 June: South of England  
Show, Ardingly, West Sussex

1 August: Jamie Ellis,  
"Addressing the Sustainability of  
beekeeping in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century",  
East Horsley

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

## [News from the Apiary](#)

### [Apiary Meetings](#)

Starting in May the Sunday apiary meetings will start at 1.30pm. We aim to open the hives and do practical beekeeping but as always it is weather dependent.

### [Swarms](#)

With the swarm season upon us anyone who wants to be put on the swarm waiting list should either phone Joyce Atkinson on 020 8657 2817 or email [croydonbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:croydonbeekeepers@gmail.com). Priority will be given to members who don't already have bees.

### [‘Weeds’ are Good for Us!: some timely thoughts from David Shepherd](#)

The topic of **forage** is one that crops up quite frequently and Mark (Chairman) and I have met up several times at some very interesting lectures on different aspects of foraging and bee nutrition. This has spurred me into penning a little on the topic. Most of us just assume that the workers will just find what is available and perhaps we may never get around to using the microscope for identifying the sources of pollen being brought into the hive.

At Hartley Down the original intention was to develop an informal area of bee friendly plants which would give folk some ideas for their own gardens. This intention falls

well short at present and a few weeks ago the subject arose of which hedges, shrubs and trees to trim: due consideration was given to whether to cut back the ivy, blackberry, willow and hazel – important sources of nectar and/or pollen. Our current *A. mellifera* species co-evolved with ‘wild’ flowering plants over many millions of years well before *Homo sapiens* even started to evolve. So it is natural to deduce that the plants that existed before the development of horticulture and agriculture, should still be an important part of their ‘natural diet’. This is not to say that more ‘modern’ perhaps recent introduced

plants are of no use – quite the opposite in quite a few cases.

Some very interesting random facts:

- ‘In September and October (on average) 89% of pollen pellets brought in by worker bees were from **Ivy**.
- Ivy nectar is high quality with 49% sugar – what else is available at that time of the year in large quantities? (LASI – Sussex Univ.).
- Pollen nutrition affects stress resistance in bees: they are better able to cope with disease and other stresses that they may

encounter. A wide variety of sources provides a healthy diet – strong healthy bees.

- Dandelions in early spring are an important source of food for bees despite its pollen being deficient in four important amino acids; but nevertheless essential when perhaps other sources are unavailable.
- There is much indication that workers will be selective about different nectar sources – seeking out those that are perhaps

richer in sugars, or more suitable in diet.

When ideal sources are not available they still need those of a lesser 'quality'.

- A historical analysis of the range of pollinators in selected ancient woodland, heath land and other sites in the UK showed a big decline in the last 70-80 years: the greatest in rural areas, those adjacent to urban areas being less affected - modern farming practice has had a serious effect. (Reading Univ.)

If we consider the hazel, willow, dandelions, blackberry and ivy that exist with other such 'weeds' in large quantities on waste ground, abandoned and 'ill kept' gardens, railway embankments, road verges: surely they are **valuable sources of forage throughout the year, to keep our bees healthy!** Urban gardens play an important role, but remember our honey bee is **top pollinator** and needs large areas of 'flowers' – **they are not going to do the waggle dance just for a few individual plants** however attractive they may seem to us!

David S.

## [Events for your diary](#)

### ***Croydon Beekeepers Stand at 2016 Shows***

Our sales and education stand appears at a number of events throughout the year – here are the locations so far for 2016:

- 21 May Knight's Garden Centre
- 4 June Park Hill
- 11 June Reedham Trust, Old Lodge Lane
- 18 June North End, Croydon
- 25 June Sanderstead Horticultural Show
- 16 July Millers Pond, Shirley

## Further information re South of England Show, 9-11 June, Ardingly, West Sussex

<http://www.seas.org.uk/south-of-england-show/>

During these three days, the South of England Agricultural Society (SEAS) throws the spotlight on the best of British agriculture, equestrianism, horticulture, food and drink, country crafts, sports and many other activities.

**Amongst all this, within the always popular Honey and Bees marquee, we will be presenting:**

- Show Benches of Competitive Honey Entries
- Sales of Associations and Individual Members Honey and other products of the hive.
- Flying Bees Demonstration Area
- Observation Hives
- Information about Bees & Beekeeping
- Information about Beekeeping Associations and Training opportunities

- Sales of beekeeping equipment from Paynes Southdown Bees.

This event provides a great day out for families.

Hence it presents a great opportunity for BKA's throughout the South of England to showcase your own Association, promote your local Taster Days and Training Courses, sell your local honey, inform the visiting public about bees, help them understand swarming and generally support beekeepers throughout the South East. And if your members enter the Honey Show itself, there is silverware to be won.

This year the organisers of the Honey & Bees marquee's activities are keen to see and welcome representation by ALL the many Associations and Divisions within the 'South of England'.

This event is as much 'YOUR' show as your own County Show.

Whether 2016 might be a first time ever, or for some time, or you are existing regular participants, do join in his year.

**Meanwhile ...**

- Would any of your members be able and like to serve as a Steward within the marquee for even, say, half a day?

A key link (included in the Notice) is that of the Bees & Honey page on the South of England Show's website. <http://www.seas.org.uk/info/competing/competing-south-england-show/bees-honey/> From this page, the Honey Show Schedule and Entry Forms can be downloaded.

For further info or to offer information, materials or assistance, in the first instance please contact me directly. [richard.d.bradfield@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.d.bradfield@btinternet.com)

**Kind Regards, Richard Bradfield**

## Courses and learning

### **Jamie Ellis: “Addressing the sustainability of beekeeping in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” – Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016, East Horsley Village Hall**

Surrey Beekeeping Association have just announced this talk with Jamie Ellis, the Associate Professor of Entomology at the University of Florida.

Jamie is well known for his lectures at beekeeping conferences however this is a unique opportunity for us to have him to ourselves! A flyer with further information

is attached to this email. To book, email Sandra Rickwood at rickwoodsba@gmail.com or call 01932 244 536. Tickets cost £5 (free to under 18s).

### **NDB Course in Surrey – 20-21 May, Reigate BKA Apiary**

Adam Leitch NDB (Surrey) and Tony Harris NDB (Scotland) will be running a 'NDB Short course' on colony manipulation in May at Reigate BKA's apiary in Surrey. This 2 day course is open to all beekeepers, although aimed at those with at least a year or two experience. The course aims to take you through key manipulations required for successful beekeeping. It looks at the theory and practical aspects of well used techniques,

allowing beekeepers to undertake them successfully but also provide the theory behind them so that beekeepers can modify them to suit their own requirements and management systems. Students preparing for their BBKA General & Advanced Husbandry courses will benefit from this course.

We will spend time in the classroom and out in the apiary covering the following topics:

Making Nucleus colonies  
Introducing Queens  
Feeding colonies  
Sterilising using Acetic Acid  
Shook Swarms  
Artificial Swarms  
Progressive Comb Replacement  
Uniting Colonies  
Bailey Comb Change.

The course takes place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016 and costs £80 including a light lunch. You can book the course through the NDB website or with the following link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/manipulations-handling-2-tickets-24257083590>

## ***General Husbandry Practical Assessment Training, 21 May, Wimbledon BKA Apiary at Morden Hall***

See attached flyer . . . £25 for SBKA members, £35 for non-members. See attached flyer;

to book contact Sandra Rickwood on 01932 244 326 or

email [rickwoodsaka@gmail.com](mailto:rickwoodsaka@gmail.com).

*Our local agent for E H Thorne Beehives Ltd is:*

*Richard Palmer tel 020 8679 0401 or email [palmersbees@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:palmersbees@hotmail.co.uk)*