

Croydon Beekeepers' Association Newsletter

A Division of Surrey
Beekeepers' Association

Est 1879

July 2017

Editorial

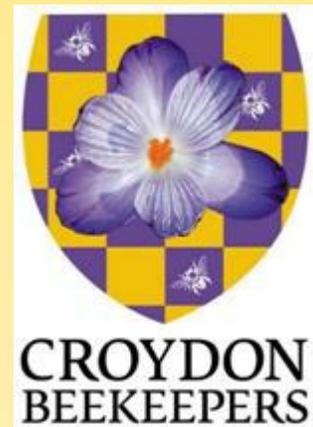
Well generally the weather has remained kind to us and the bees have been taking advantage of it; they appear to be bringing in plenty of forage and judging from what I've been hearing some members are expecting a good yield. Certainly at the Apiary there are at least two hives that are doing better than expected, even some of the Nucs. have expanded very quickly and are putting away stores with gusto.

This has certainly been a bit of a swarmy year and at times we've put all of our Nuc. boxes to use. There are encouraging signs that some of the swarms may be useful in the long term and time will tell. Some merging of colonies in future weeks will hopefully ensure that we have good strong colonies to see us through the winter and to kick off in the spring.

I trust that you have been carrying out your regular varroa checks and will be ready to treat as appropriate after the honey has been removed. Don't forget that most treatments are temperature sensitive and must be applied whilst the weather is still warm.

Derek Read

Chairman: Bob Barnes
Secretary: Joyce Atkinson
Treasurer: Tamar Devane
Editor: Derek Read



Dates for your diary

www.croydonbeekeepers.org.uk

Meetings

13th August - Apiary Meeting

19th August - Sevenoaks BBQ

25th August Extraction Meet -

Sth Nutfield - Details to follow

Apiary Meetings in September & October
continue on the 2nd & 4th Sundays

Honey Shows:

Croydon: 30th September

National: 26th - 28th October

Chairman's chat

A couple of Sundays ago I was feeling pretty gloomy about my beekeeping. I'd done my weekly inspections in the morning and found that rather than getting on with the important job of bringing in the summer nectar, several of my colonies had decided to make swarm preparations. No bees were lost due to clipped queens, but a lot of manipulations were needed and colonies that should have been working hard were now queenless. I was beginning to wonder about my methods.

Then it was off to the club apiary for our regular members' meeting. We had a great turn out, with a range from absolute beginners to those who have collected the complete set of bee exams. As we made plans to split up into the usual small groups to start looking at the colonies, the talk amongst those with hives was about how everyone's colonies were trying to swarm. Aha! Well that made me feel much better.

.. and then at the end of the session, summarising the afternoon over tea and cake, someone reminded me of an important thing "I've had a great time, I'd forgotten how much more enjoyable it is working with other beekeepers rather than being on my own all the time".

So whatever your level of experience, do come along to one of our Sunday afternoon sessions. Share your experiences, learn new things, help others learn, and eat cake. The more people come along, the more worthwhile are the meetings.

Bob Barnes

Small Ads

To enquire about any of these, email: info@croydonbeekeepers.org.uk (or telephone Bob Barnes)

Extractor for sale

Frank Castrique's wife would like his honey extractor to go to another beekeeper. It is a 9 frame unit of plastic construction and has been modified to be electrically powered. A donation in Frank's memory would be appropriate.

Practical Assessments

Good luck to the Croydon members who took their Basic exam on 22nd July at the club apiary under Tracey Carter's excellent tutorage.

Bee Health

The BBKA is launching a new exam called the **Bee Health Certificate** which is aimed to be the next step in practical beekeeping after the Basic. It is intended to be suitable for beekeepers with just a few colonies for whom the General Husbandry exam isn't appropriate. The exam would take place in club apiaries. There was information about this in the April 2017 editing of BBKA News. We hope that Croydon will lead the way with a first wave of candidates being assessed in 2018 – let us know if this might be you!

News from the Apiary - June/July



The poor state of fencing between our apiary and the three adjoining neighbours is at last beginning to be addressed and soon we hope to be clearing the area in preparation.

Historically when CBKA moved from the old apiary (next to Reedham Station) well over 30 years ago, our members at that time agreed to construct a 'buffer strip' with shrub and panel screening: since then the original fence has 'mysteriously vanished' and although the planted shrubs have matured, large gaps in have appeared in the screening which are being used by the **roe deer** in seeking refuge

when chased off the allotment plots. Naturally the allotment plot holders are very keen to see this barrier completed ASAP and have offered to help - we may also be asking members for help at some stage.



Those of us who are subscribed to Beebase updates will have learned that varroa populations (appearance of wing deformities and perforated cappings etc) are very high in some parts of the country. We do not have to remind everyone that **VARROA** mites are the number one challenge to anyone keeping bees today – **neglect this at one's peril**. We have just done the June 'varroa drop' count with our apiary hives and thankfully, levels seem to be reasonable low; however when the 'robbing season' starts, that can all change in weeks!

Whilst on the subject of regular email updates, BeeCraft warned us recently of the need to

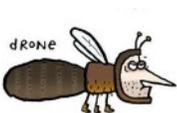


regularly check food supplies especially with splits and recently acquired swarms. The June Gap is a reality and occurs in regions in the UK (but not in all countries) when the sudden onslaught of grasses suppresses the growth of most wild flowers: later when the taller perennials come into flower (eg. blackberry bramble) they reinstate the earlier high levels of nectar. Garden flowers such as Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, most of the hardy Geraniums, the single petalled roses ('dog rose') provide valuable nectar during June, as do thymes,

coriander, rosemary and ... best of all borage. This may be why the June Gap is often not noticed in urban areas.

Best wishes

The Apiary Drone



Dog Rose

Meadow Cranesbill

Borage

*Our local agent for Thorne Beehives Ltd is:
Richard Palmer tel: 020 8679 0401 or email palmersbees@gmail.com*