



# Romford Division

## Virtual meetings

Hello everyone, I hope that you all remain well and are managing to cope with everyday life in these very strange times. I'm sure that we are all following the governments advice, staying at home and venturing outside only when absolutely necessary, to protect our families and neighbours. Most of all we must help prevent the NHS becoming overwhelmed with an explosion of new cases, Its the very least we can do.

On a more practical note we would like to continue to provide mutual support to fellow beekeepers within our division. Some of you are new to the craft and will need help and advice while others may become unable to tend to your hives due to self isolation or because you are unwell.

To achieve this we would like to set up a monthly or fortnightly "virtual" Divisional meeting where we can present something topical (swarm control, varroa treatment, hive management etc.) and have an interactive Q&A session to raise and discuss current bee-keeping issues. To do this we need some technical help. So if any members, or if you have family or friends who have the knowledge necessary to help set this up then please get in contact with me or another of the committee members. The Division has a healthy bank balance so if this requires some expenditure then we can easily afford it.

I'm quite sure that we will continue to be allowed to visit apiary sites to tend our bees. Generally tending livestock is considered to be an essential activity but the BBKA is currently seeking clarification from the government on this point. When we do visit an apiary, whether it is one of the Divisional sites or elsewhere, it is vital that we follow the current rules and do not congregate in groups at an apiary or make unnecessary visits. Lastly if any members become unwell or unable to tend their bees due to enforced isolation please let me or other members of the committee know and we will try our best to find another local beekeeper to help out.

Stay safe everybody.

**Paul.**

## Romford Division Contacts:

Secretary: **Sue Richardson**

01708 381900 / 07971 957333 ~ [susanmrichardson7@gmail.com](mailto:susanmrichardson7@gmail.com)

Chairman: **Paul Wiltshire**

01277 375454 / 07870 258192 ~ [paul.g.wiltshire@btinternet.com](mailto:paul.g.wiltshire@btinternet.com)

Divisional Voting Member/Trustee: **Jim McNeill**

01708 765898/ 07743 310143 ~ [jimandliz44@aol.co.uk](mailto:jimandliz44@aol.co.uk)

Membership Secretary: **Pat Allen**

01708 220897/07958 938427 ~ [pat.allen7@icloud.com](mailto:pat.allen7@icloud.com)



## Websites:

[www.ebka.org](http://www.ebka.org)

[romfordbeekeepers.wordpress.com](http://romfordbeekeepers.wordpress.com)

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

**Committee Meeting:** The March committee meeting was cancelled due to the Coronavirus and the business was sorted out as far as possible by email. For the time being no further indoor committee meeting is being scheduled.

## Monthly Meetings Cancelled Due to COVID 19

Due to recent government advice the next two monthly meetings - April and May - have sadly been cancelled.

The situation will be reviewed and members kept informed. In the light of the latest government announcements, it looks very likely that further meetings will need to be cancelled.

**Sue Richardson**

## April Beekeeping Notes

It should be possible to look in the hives this month, and move towards weekly inspections to keep ahead of swarming preparations. Check at the entrance first; purposeful activity is what you should see, with pollen going in. Make sure the temperature is above 14°C before you open the hive, and be as quick as you can. Check stores and be prepared to feed fondant or syrup if necessary (though I had a quick peek into my hives in March and there was plenty of food).

Monitor the varroa drop and treat if the count is high. It is too late for Apiguard now as you will be putting supers on and there may be a small honey flow, so maybe use MAQS instead.

April's important job is...**to clip the queen's wings**, and mark her. If you have not done this before, get an experienced beekeeper to do it for you. Not everyone does this, and it is not essential, but it does help in swarm control and you are less likely to lose a swarm. The reasons for doing it in April are that the bees will (probably) not have begun swarm preparations yet and the colony is not too big to make it difficult to find the queen.

**Pat Allen**

## Bulk Buys

Members that ordered supplies should have received their invoices from me with payment and collection details.

**Lorna Pattle**

## National Open Gardens Scheme – Ed Fairey – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The National Gardens Scheme started in 1859 funding nurses and progressed to donating millions of pounds to nursing charities.

William Rathbone employed Mrs. Robinson to nurse his wife during her final illness. In 1859 his wife died. After she died, he continued to employ Mrs. Robinson to go to the poverty-stricken parts of Liverpool to teach the people basic hygiene and to relieve their suffering. After one month she was so upset at the condition of the people she felt she could not carry on, but he persuaded her to stay for the agreed 3 months. When the 3 months had finished Mrs. Robinson was so dedicated to the job that she continued with the good work. She said that nothing would entice her back to private nursing. He wrote to Florence Nightingale who advised him to start a nurses training school.

In 1926 Elsie Wagg suggested opening gardens to raise money to start district nurses. She suggested that people opened their gardens charging a shilling per person. This raised £8,191.00 with the 609 gardens that opened.

In the 1930 Vita Sackville West and Sir Winston Churchill participated in the Open Gardens. In 1932 the first guide to National Garden Scheme was produced at a cost of 1 shilling.

Even after the NHS took over nurses training, the Scheme still raised money for nurses. The number of charities the National Garden Scheme helps are McMillian, Marie Curie, Hospice UK, Carers Trust, Crossroads, Parkinson UK and the National Autistic Society.

The society holds a lot of special events throughout the year including a Gardens and Health week in May.

During the year lots of cups of tea and homemade cakes are served at the gardens involved in the scheme.

*Jilly Speakman-Bell*

### Courses:

**Beginners Beekeeping Course:** The Course is almost full and it will be very sad if we have to cancel it. At the moment I am looking into how we could deliver the theory sessions without being gathered together indoors. The practical sessions are outdoors, with everyone wearing veils and gloves, so it may be that these can go ahead safely. I shall be canvassing the views of the students and tutors and we will be listening to ongoing official advice in order to come to a decision.

**Follow-on Refresher Sessions:** As with the Beginners Course, we will be monitoring the situation before making final decisions about these. Some members have said they are interested and maybe they would like to let me know their views on whether we should go ahead with these sessions. All of them could be held outdoors I believe, and with veils and gloves, which should keep us safe should we go ahead with these.

Please continue

### School Visit

On 12<sup>th</sup> March club members Liz Francis, Alan Kingsford and I, visited Squirrels Heath Infant School Romford. Bee hives, wax, pollen and nectar were explained to 80 6 year-olds, over 3 sessions. We had taken a couple of child size veils, smoker and hive tool with us, plus picture boards and the virtual hive. All of which kept the children engaged for a 40 minute session. At the end everyone received a double-sided bee-topic picture to be coloured in - and they all got to taste some honey.

The teachers and assistants took part in pretending to be the most delicious flowers in the room that the scout bees had to do a waggle dance to. You can see the Drones doing their version of a waggle, whilst the Workers looked on. They got to do their dance later on.

This is the second year we have visited the school and hopefully will be invited back again next year. In the pipeline we have another school booked and a cub/beaver group too. Also, another cub/scout group have been in touch to ask about a visit. The only stumbling block at the moment is the coronavirus issue, but when it passes the critical stage, we will resume our visits.



Drones demonstrate a waggle



Happy group at the end of the session

Passing on honey bee information to the next generation is as important as all the practices we use to preserve the bee population. So, if you hear of a school or group who are interested in a visit do pass the details onto to either me or Pat Allen. But don't forget the adult groups too.

If you want to join the team of members who are doing these visits contact me so I can add your name to our list.

**Helen Kingsford** [h.kingsford@btinternet.com](mailto:h.kingsford@btinternet.com)

Whatever happens with courses, the bees will be looked after throughout the summer, and necessary manipulations will be made, some of which were planned to happen on the Beginners Course and some in the Follow-on Sessions. If necessary, I shall work alone, but some manipulations are much easier with at least one other person helping, so if you are up for it let me know. Your views on these matters are welcome and invited.

**Pat Allen**