



# Romford Division

## March Beekeeping Notes

Mouseguards and woodpecker guards should be **off** now – mouseguards can knock pollen off the legs of the bees and they need fresh pollen at this time of year.

It **may** be warm enough to open up for a **very quick** inspection this month, but you can learn a lot by just watching the front of the hive. If pollen is going in and activity is purposeful, then all is probably well inside. If you must open up, make sure the temperature is at least 14°C and calm, and be quick! If you think there is something wrong, please do ask for help.

Be ready to feed if stores are low (in a contact feeder or frame feeder), but if the weather is reasonable and the bees are flying well, this should not be necessary. Towards the end of the month, if you wintered with a super underneath, then you can swap the boxes back and put in the queen excluder. You can put a further super over the crownboard (if the crownboard has a hole in it), and if the bees need more space they will go into it.

*Pat Allen*

## Information for Members

New members are no longer given Member Information Packs, but up-to-date information for all members can be found on the Romford Beekeepers website. You can find out who does what, how to borrow the honey extractor, etc.

Many thanks  
*Pat Allen*

## Romford Division Contacts:

Secretary: **Sue Richardson**

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Membership Secretary: **Pat Allen**

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## Websites:

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

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

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

**Committee Meeting:** .: Thursday 11th March 2021,  
7.30pm, via Zoom. (**Note change of day**)

**Meeting:** Thursday April 1st, 8.00pm via Zoom.

**Topic:** Skyscraper Beekeeping

**Speaker:** Graham Royle



The bees are buzzing

It's a warm sunny day

The flowers are blooming

**Spring** is on the way!

## **OOPS MY BEES HAVE SWARMED** - Martin Hann and Clare Densley (Buckfast Abbey)

Martin and Clare explained that swarming is a natural event for the honey bee colony. It is healthy and beneficial.

It creates genetic diversity, gives the opportunity for clean comb, the reduction of parasites and infection in a new nest and the opportunity to improve foraging, plus creating the chance of a new queen.

During the year the stages for the honey bee are:

*Spring*; expand the colony to its highest population during the summer months, perhaps early supersedure and maybe swarming.

*Summer*; stabilising the colony and hoarding food.

*Autumn*; the preparation for winter.

*Winter*; the bees concentrate on keeping warm to survive.

Different colonies have a variety of tendencies to swarming. The Carniolan and African bees swarm excessively, whereas the Caucasian bees are not overly inclined to swarming.

A feral colony of bees living in a tree trunk or any fixed cavity is prone to swarm each year.

To help avoid over swarming adding more boxes will reduce the overcrowding in the hive and will reduce congestion. Overcrowding restricts the bees' movement and they may not be aware of the presence of the queen. Therefore, by adding supers and a brood box will mean the bees have more room to move around the hive and the messenger bees will let the other bees know that the queen is present.

The queen needs to secrete pheromones to stop the bees making queen cells. This tells the bees that she is present and fit for purpose. The queen's pheromones secrete out of the queen all the time as an oily liquid and spread all over her body. If the level of her pheromones drops the bees will make cups and even cells.

Even if you give the bees a lot of space it won't guarantee they will not swarm, likewise, if you cut out queen cells.

Whatever you do you cannot completely avoid your bees swarming as you cannot be in control all the time.

**JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL**

## **Courses**

**Refreshers:** I will definitely run a session on Managing Nucs & Mini-nucs, most likely in May. Date and venue to be decided.

**Basic Preparation:** I would urge those who have been keeping bees now for at least a couple of years to consider taking the **BBKA Basic Assessment**. These take place during May, June or July and application can be made at any time - the sooner the better (see BBKA website). If there are a number of members who have applied then I will do a Basic Preparation Session in early May.

**Beginners Course:** This is fully booked, with 30 students. I shall send out more information to the students in late March.

**Pat Allen**

## **EGM Thursday 4th February 2021 via Zoom Meeting**

The minutes of the AGM held on 14th January 2021 and the accounts for 2020 had been sent out to members for their perusal before the EGM.

Minutes of the AGM to be amended to show that Nick Messenger had not made his apologies for absence but did attend the meeting. My apologies. Amended copy will be signed as soon as possible.

The examined 2020 accounts had been updated to show correct allocation of The Chase expenses paid to Rob Hyde and were approved.

**Sue Richardson**

## **Where to get bees?**

Be very careful where you get your bees. Below are some reliable sources.

David Rudland: 381 Godstone Road, Whyteleafe, Surrey CR3 0BF  
07798 915480 [enquire@eastssurreybees.co.uk](mailto:enquire@eastssurreybees.co.uk)

Terry Thrussell: Westcott, Bromley Lane, Wellpond Green, Standon SG11 1NW  
01279 842367

Ted Gradosielski (Ted Grad): Nazeing, Essex  
01992 890986 / 07966 310004 [teds.honeybees@gmail.com](mailto:teds.honeybees@gmail.com)