



Romford Division

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meeting: Thursday 13th May 2021, 7.30pm, via Zoom.

Meeting: Thursday June 3rd 8.00pm via Zoom.

Topic: Bee Health; What could possibly go wrong?

Speakers: Robert Smith

Courses Update

Beginners: The 2021 course has finally begun. The two theory sessions have taken place, via Zoom, as we cannot meet in such a large group face to face yet. The first practical session will be on Tuesday 18th May. The Division currently has five full colonies and two nucleus colonies.

Refresher Sessions: A session on **Changing Combs** was held recently in the Teaching Apiary with a small group of members. It was great to be able to meet 'for real' again and I hope the attendees all found it useful. A session on **Managing Nucs & Mini-nucs** will be held in May. There is still time to join this group if you are quick.

Pat Allen

May Beekeeping Notes

The weather may still be a bit warm-cold-warm and so on, but the bees are building up anyway. Make sure you are getting those **supers on** – particularly important if you are close to an oil seed rape field.

Keep up weekly inspections and look out for **queen cells**. Please do not panic when you see them, but have your swarm control plan and equipment ready to use straight away.



Testing for Nosema

Make one of your inspections a **disease inspection**. For this you must be able to see every cell, so you will need to shake the bees off all frames (**except** one with a queen cell you wish to keep, which you should brush instead), and check the brood carefully. If you see anything you think is wrong, take a photo and contact an experienced beekeeper or, if you suspect Foul Brood Disease, contact the Seasonal Bee Inspector. If you suspect *Nosema*, then take a sample of 30 bees (preferably without the queen!!!), freeze them and I will test them for you. Make sure you are **registered on BeeBase** so that you get any disease alerts that may be sent out.

Pat Allen



Testing for Nosema

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SKYSCRAPER BEEKEEPING - Graham Royle – 1st April 2021

Graham told us the advantages and disadvantages of large colonies. He explained small colonies require as much management as a large colony, but produce much less honey. By having fewer colonies, that are large as opposed to more colonies that are small, you will spend much less time, use less equipment and have a much larger yield of honey.

The disadvantages of a large hive are that it may be difficult to handle the hive because of multiple supers piled on top of one another, with the possibility of them becoming unstable. Plus, there is the risk of swarming. A larger hive can lead to a large increase in the colony population, resulting in hive overcrowding and brood nest overcrowding.

To prevent swarming make sure you keep a watch on available space for your bees and add a super earlier enough. Equalise the colonies. Keep them busy by encouraging them to build comb. Clip queens' wings (if you are a beekeeper that agrees with clipping wings).

If you have two small colonies and decide to unite them you will get a bigger production of honey. Place a division board on top of the larger colony and place the smaller one on top, as the extra warmth will encourage growth of the top colony.

If the colony has empty combs the bees will work harder to fill them, giving room for nectar processing. You must regularly inspect for swarming, and make sure the bees have a suitable amount of space.

Graham also explained about multiple queen systems. A single colony with two or more queens, having a separate brood box for each queen.

A two-queen system requires two brood chambers for an overwintered colony. Stimulative pollen feeding needs to start in March. By April there should be 6-7 frames of brood in the colony. Add a new queen in a third brood box when the Dandelions are in flower. Use a frame feeder to feed for 10-12 days, then remove the feeders and add supers. Combine the colonies when the main flow is in progress.

The advantages of a multiple queen system is that the colony grows rapidly, there is a large production of honey and the loss of one queen can be borne.

The disadvantages are that the height, weight and stability of the hives may be difficult to cope with. Especially as the height may cause the hive to lean over and therefore, would need shoring up to prevent it from falling over.

Once the flow is over, remove the supers and reduce the brood boxes to only two. Make up nucs for the surplus bees and brood.

Jilly Speakman-Bell

Are you getting the most out of your membership?

Romford Division has over 130 members, including 31 Beginner Course Students and 7 Associates. All registered members (i.e., excluding partner members and associates) should receive **BBKA News** every month – please let me know if you don't get your copy.

Also, everyone should receive the **link to the members monthly Zoom meeting** from our Secretary, Sue Richardson. The 'attendance' at these virtual meetings has remained fairly constant, but only about 30–35 members come to them. We have very entertaining and knowledgeable speakers at these meetings, so it seems a shame that more members are not tuning in.

We on the Committee would love to know why. Is this because the topics are of no interest to you? Is the time not good for you? Is the day wrong? Do you have technical issues with using Zoom? If you are one of our members who does not come to the meetings, then do please let someone on the Committee know why that is. And all members, please, let us know what topics you would like to hear about at meetings.

Kath Keeper

We send Tom Keeper our condolences on the sad loss of his dear wife Kath. Kath passed away recently and will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

Romford Division have sent a donation in Kath's memory to the Brooke Action for Working Horses and Donkeys, a charity which she supported.

Tom would like to thank members for their kind thoughts.

