



# Romford Division



## Dates for the Diary

**Committee Meeting:** Wednesday 10th May 19:30, in person meeting

**May Meeting:** Thursday 4th May 20:00

**Topic:** Using Mini Nucs for Swarm Control

**Venue:** Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL

**Speaker:** Pat Allen

Honeybees taking advantage of early flowering crocus, Photo Pat Allen.



## APRIL Beekeeping Notes

The weather should start to warm up quite nicely this month and colonies will be building up quickly. Don't let them catch you out with swarming, have your plan and equipment ready - including those mini-nucs for those spare queen cells so you can make up for your winter losses. *[I will bring some Apideas to the meeting for you to buy if you want one - **cash only** please.]*

If you clip your queens, this is the month to do it, and mark them (this year's colour is **red**). Contact me if you are nervous about doing this yourself, or ask an experienced beekeeper to help you or do it for you.

Make sure your bees have space for honey. Put a super over the crownboard if you are not sure they need the space yet, and swap it below the crownboard when you find bees using it.

**Pat Allen**

## Swarming, Norman McDonald, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

Swarming is natural behaviour for honey bees when they are trying to gain more space. It is a way of splitting the colony, so that each colony has the space to reproduce, thereby creating two colonies from one. Swarming usually occurs during Spring or early Summer when the colonies are naturally increasing. You need to set aside a day every week from April until June to check for queen cells. On finding a queen cell, do not destroy it as you first need to ascertain that the old queen is still there. You do not want to be left queenless! If there is a sealed queen cell it could mean the other bees have already swarmed and that the cell is ready to hatch.

To the onlooker it can appear to be quite alarming seeing a swarm of bees flying or even hanging from where they are resting, waiting for the scout bees to direct them to a new place to set up a colony. When a colony naturally swarms, they go to anywhere where there is space. Norman had to collect a swarm once that had taken up residence in an old suitcase. Whereas, if you artificially swarm you will provide frames in the bees' new home. Hence, providing not only the space for bees, but giving them the frames too.

To avoid swarming, the beekeeper must be most vigilant during the swarming season checking on your hives at least once a week, and you need to have spare equipment prepared for this inevitability.

When you artificially swarm move the original hive to one side, this will contain the nurse bees, brood and queen cell. Put a replacement hive where the original hive was, with drawn comb or new foundation plus the original queen. The flying bees will then occupy the new hive containing the original queen (on the original site). You have now separated the queen and flying bees from the nurse bees, brood and queen cell. In four days check the hive where the new queen cell is to confirm that no new queen cells have been made.

The whole process of artificial swarming needs you to be able to ascertain if you have a queen. If there are eggs in the hive, this will mean the queen is still there. In April it is reasonably warm and should be easier for you to mark your queen and clip her wings if possible. If you can't clip her wings, ask and someone from the club will come and help you to do this.

Remember bees are a wild animal and can sometimes be unpredictable, you may find the whole process to be an absolute disaster the first time, but take heed it will improve!

**Jilly Speakman-Bell**

## Monthly Meeting June 1st Coronation Celebration Teaching Apiary

We are planning to hold our June meeting at the teaching apiary - Thames Chase, Pike Lane, Upminster - and to have a belated Coronation celebration, similar to our Queen's Jubilee get together last year. The plan is to have refreshments and a chance to chat and catch up. It would be very helpful if members could indicate whether or not you would be interested in attending. We will ask for final numbers nearer the time. The meeting would start earlier than our usual 8.00 pm start.

Please could you email Dawn Doyland on [dawn\\_doyland@hotmail.com](mailto:dawn_doyland@hotmail.com) so that we can gauge attendance.

**Sue Richardson**

### **Committee Matters**

**New Chair** - Julie Mugglestone has kindly offered to stand as chair - she was voted in unanimously at our committee meeting on Tuesday 21st March. No other members have expressed any interest in standing. Thank you Julie.

We still need an Education Officer! Please consider taking up this post. This year's beginner course and taster sessions are organised, if anyone is interested it would be a good idea if you could come along to some or all of the sessions to see exactly what goes on. Should you take up the post you will be fully supported. Pat Allen will be stepping down. Thank you.

**Sue Richardson**

### **Courses 2023**

**Beginners:** Starts on Tuesday 18th April. The course is now **fully booked**.

**Taster Sessions:** The poster with details of the two sessions – **Saturday 8th July and Sunday 30th July** – is on the Romford Beekeepers website. Plenty of space available so far.

**Basic Assessment Preparation:** There is still time to get your application in to the BBKA for the Basic Assessment. Go for it. It will boost your confidence, and I'm sure your bees will appreciate it. (And there are prizes.)

**Pat Allen**

### **Healthy Hive guide OFFER**

I am still collecting names for the **BBKA Healthy Hive Guide**. I shall be ordering this month and I will bring them to the May meeting.

To remind you, the offer is this: the member's price is £3 (full price £7). I shall be emailing those who have ordered to let them have the Division's bank details so they can pay. The Division will buy the Guides – to your paid order only – on your behalf and you will need to collect your copy either at a meeting or otherwise by arrangement.

If you are interested in this offer, then you have until **14th April** to put in your order, to me please.

**Pat Allen**

### **Romford Division Contacts:**

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### **Websites:**

<https://ebka.org>

<https://romfordbeekeepers.org>