
the Petersfield Beekeeper

Diary

EVENT	DATE	VENUE
<p>ALL APIARY MEETINGS ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. The current situation has led to the cancellation of some of the summer shows which the association usually attends. Let us spare a thought for the organisers and for the stall holders whose livelihoods are at risk and hope that some of the shows that take place later in the season, including our own Honey Show, may yet take place.</p>		

Please send items for inclusion in the July Newsletter by 25 June to depeyrecave@gmail.com

We urgently need to find a new Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Do you have some spare time and are you comfortable working with numbers?



Resources for Members

In these unusual times PDBKA is still working. Here is a summary of beekeeping resources available to Association members.

Rowan Roberts, Swarm Co-ordinator is fielding the swarm 'phone, connecting members with potential colonies and the Apiary Custodians are working in the Association Apiary caring for the Association hives and producing new colonies with five purchased Buckfast Queens. In 2019 the Association purchased two Carniolian queens to create strong colonies which would build up quickly in the spring, producing brood to create new colonies for new beekeepers. Unfortunately neither queen survived the damp winter of 2019/20. Buckfast queens, bred for their industry, health and disinclination to swarm, should fare better.

The Apiary is closed to members but the Custodians are recording their inspections, posted on the Apiary page of the Association website.

Although we cannot 'get-together' to swap knowledge at the Apiary over tea & cake, members are not alone. PDBKA members are available by 'phone or Facebook to answer questions and give support and there is a wealth of online information.

The PDBKA website has the beginner training notes on the training page and Apiary notes & videos on the Apiary page.

The BBKA has a wealth of articles on all aspects of beekeeping and back issues of the BBKA News with the 'monthly tasks' featured.

The NBU/BeeBase has information on bee health.

Beekeeping suppliers like Thorne have construction videos and, for a subscription, both BBKA and Beecraft produce excellent magazines.

If all else fails, the bees have been at it a long time and will survive whatever we inflict on them!

Happy beekeeping

Pippa

Here is a link to an interesting article about Chronic Bee Paralysis

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/01/alarm-over-deaths-of-bees-from-rapidly-spreading-viral-disease>



May forage in my garden

My bees, at the bottom of our very over-large, very overgrown victorian garden at the edge of woodland on the Lower Greensand escarpment above Liss are spoilt for choice at this time of year. Even when it is dry there is plenty of nectar & pollen to gather from the trees, In May the Sycamore & Holly came into bloom and there is blossom on them still.

Many of the larger houses around Liss were originally the country residences of Victorian gentlemen with gardens planted with 'exotic' specimen trees. Two of these, Robinia & Liriodendron,(not trees for the average garden) come into there own in late May. Both staple nectar sources for my brother, keeping bees in Maryland, USA for me they add a rich note to the June honey and, with the lime about to burst into bloom stop me worrying about a 'June gap' in the nectar flow.

In May we and the bees were overwhelmed with the scent of azalea & wisteria now June sees the rambling roses burst into flower. 'Rambling Rector', covering 30 feet of a very neglected pear tree was a-buzz in the sunshine this morning.



Swarm Coordinator

I read the December Newsletter and learnt that Greg Cumming was passing on the responsibility of Swarm Coordinator. Greg has done a long and fantastic job.

I have found with bees that the more I learn, the less I realise I know. So, to try and increase my knowledge, I foolishly volunteered. Soon I found out it was to be me!! I picked up the swarm line from Dave on the 7th April and that was it... In panic I wrote to Greg who very kindly supplied me with a crib sheet and some advice.

There I was early April waiting for the phone to burst into life....NOTHING. Then... nothing! I had now taken to leaving the phone indoors while out on the smallholding. Then, on 27th April, I had come indoors for a coffee and a strange ringtone started:

Wow it's the swarm line!!

Quick! Pen! Paper!!

How am I going to answer it?

Like some superhero? 'Hi Swarm coordinator here!' Nooo too cool!!

Don't forget you represent the PDBKA...

'Hello Rowan Roberts, how can I help?'

'Hi is that Greg?'

I explained that I had taken over. I got the details and dispatched the first person on the list. I felt very pleased with myself.

Now the phone burst into life frequently and at the most inopportune times. If you need the loo, the swarm line will ring. If you're going to have lunch the swarm line will ring. I now keep it with me at all times. I've started to watch the weather even more closely and the time of day. You have to know your stuff, and be polite. I've had to answer questions like:

'Why are there no bees on my wisteria?'

'Where can I buy local honey?'

'Can you get rid of bumble bees?'

It has been fun. It's great that people are keen to pick up swarms. I have a list now of 30 people! We have had calls to 14 swarms up to 24th May. We have, to the best of my knowledge successfully hived 8 of those.

Well done to Greg for running a great service for so long, and well done to those on the swarm list who provide this essential service.

Rowan Roberts

Swarming Season – Did You Know....?!**Extract from American Bee Journal c1867 (with thanks to Brad for circulating)**

The first swarm that issues from a stock of bees in the spring is called the 'prime' swarm and is usually the strongest and best which such a stock may be expected to produce that season.

The second swarm, or first afterswarm, is termed a 'cast' and usually issues from ten to fourteen days after the prime swarm. It is commonly weaker than the prime swarm – that is, composed of fewer bees; and coming later in the season, does not always secure sufficient stores to pass the winter safely. It has the advantage however of possessing a young queen.

Should a third swarm issue from the same stock, it is termed a 'colt', and a fourth swarm is called a 'filly'. These are rare but when they make their appearance, follow the second swarm, after an interval of only one or two days.

A swarm from a swarm is called a 'maiden' swarm, and is accompanied by the same queen which issued with the parent stock when it swarmed.

In ordinary honey districts, good beekeepers generally strive to prevent the production of any afterswarm by adding supers to their hives. But as this is not always effectual, they catch and destroy the queen of the young swarm, and let the bees return to the parent stock.

Mel



Dancing Bees

David Parkinson has been listening at the entrance to his hives.....

What on earth is all that noise and bustle at the front door, Philomena? Oh, it is not one of those Asian predator things is it, that are becoming such a nuisance in some places? Fortunately for us that bloke in the white suit has not bothered to cut the grass around the hive, which helps us as these Asian predators do not like enclosed spaces and we can weave in and out of the grass to escape.

Oh, it's alright Maud; It's not one of those things, it's that excitable Sybil, pushing and jostling everyone around at the entrance. She is always trying to attract attention to herself!

Philomena do you think she has been at the last of that fermenting honey?

No Maud I think she is just excited to be able to go out and relieved that she does not have to do anymore house cleaning chores.

Well she seems to be dancing around and around in a circle, has she reverted her childhood and dancing ring a ring of roses?

No, it is called the **Round Dance** and probably means that the bloke in the white suit has left out a honeycomb, which he was stealing and now we can take it back, wait a minute Maud I think that Cynthia and her friends are joining in and creating pandemonium, they get so excited. Daisy has just entered and now she is pushing everyone around.

I hope she does not push around too much as her Ladyship is passing by, strutting around in her important manner, with her attendants and you know how starchy her chief attendant Octavia can be with any interference with her Ladyship. Just because she gets first taste of her Ladyship's perfume and we just get the dregs.

Daisy is now dancing around and increasing her circle to a figure of eight isn't that call the **Sickle Dance**?

That sounds a bit dangerous Philomena, I hope she is not going to use a real one to attract attention.

I think that Daisy is a bit of show off as she is now wagging her stomach as she moves up the centre of her figure of eight".

I believe that it is some modern dance called the **Wagtail Dance** which starts off with the Sickle Dance and develops into the Wagtail Dance, which the young ones prefer especially after sneaking some fermenting honey hidden in the back of the stores. I think that the direction she is moving and wagging her stomach shows the direction of the nectar and indicates how sweet the nectar is in the plant that Daisy has found. They are all whirling and twisting around.

Maud, they have now all gone out in the same direction. They will be disappointed if it is not as sweet as she indicated. I hope it is not oil seed rape otherwise we will have nasty tempers and exhaustion from all the work involved in a short time, let alone the overtime, especially as it is now our rest break. Of course, that will not worry fat greedy Cyril he will just keep helping himself from our stores, just wait until the end of August and he will get his comeuppance and we will make him dance to a different tune. It would seem Maud that the nectar source is more than they can handle, because some of the returning sisters are running at the other sisters and pushing them in an attempt to call them to watch a new performance of the Wagtail Dance so that those sisters with nothing to do or who have finished their chores are directed to the floral source.

It sounds like a barker at a fairground, very loud and intrusive when one is resting.

It is used Maud for recruitment to the foraging gang and is called the **Jostling Dance**. There is another dance when there is competition for different floral sources. A sister will run around on 4 legs twitching and trembling and if she meets a sister performing the Wagtail Dance head butts her and briefly pipes to tell her to stop her Wagtail Dance".



Well, it does sound a like a bit of a performance.

I think Maud that it is called the **Trembling Dance** and performed when they are trying to recruit more helpers before the sun goes down for the evening. There is a similar dance which some prefer to call the **Jerking Dance** (or its proper name '*dorsoventral abdominal vibrating dance*'). To perform the Jerking Dance a bee rushes up to another bee pushing its head against this bee and grabs it with its feet or mounts it and then vibrates its abdomen up and down.

Not sure about the last bit Philomena....

After this treatment, the bee goes over to watch the Wagtail Dance and is recruited to join the foraging gang

I hear that this Jerking Dance has other uses such as helping to keep new queens in their cells a little longer, as we do not need another haughty madam strutting around dispensing perfume to keep us coordinated. It is also used in timing our swarming and mating flights.

At least by this Jerking Dance having so many uses it saves learning any new dances, which in our short life could be a problem as we would spend all our time learning dances and not out collecting stores.

Well Philomena it would seem to be supper time. I can never understand, why we never form a proper queue it must be something to do with our Italian ancestry. There seems to be a group running and pushing other bees around in a similar manner to the Jostling Dance but not to recruit them into a foraging gang.

This is called the **Spasmodic Dance** and performed to call us to share our food. By the way, don't you think it is starting to get a bit crowded in our hive? Her Ladyship seems to have got a bit carried away and filled all the spaces. If it gets more crowded social distancing will need to be introduced and some of us will need to go elsewhere.

Something is already being planned. Look at Mavis running in a straight line across the comb, buzzing due to her wings vibrating and colliding with another bee. The two bees contact with their antennae and the buzzing increases and now they have both run off in different directions to repeat the process, I think this is called the **Buzzing Dance**.

It is getting very noisy in here and its certainly making my head buzz, it is getting like a railway station everyone rushing about in different directions. I think we are about to leave for a new house, well as long as it is comfortable and warm and not too far away. We had better fill up with food as it may be some time before we get any supper, if at all today. Oh, off we go, Goodbye everyone...

I recently moved from West Sussex to Waterlooville/Lovedean on Friday 13th March; just before the lock down was enforced. I am currently sharing an out apiary with an experienced beekeeper near Arundel, West Sussex, we are both members of Chichester beekeeping association. I currently have 4 hives and we assist each other with the running of the apiary, i.e. lifting supers, brood boxes etc. carrying out procedure's and sharing general expenses. I want to move my hives to somewhere more local as travelling backwards and forwards to Arundel is proving difficult. Is there any member with an out apiary willing to consider a similar arrangement? Thanking you in anticipation. John Howe jjhowe80@btinternet.com



Jenny Peters has a single electric hotplate available for anyone who might like to use it for melting wax.

If you are interested, please contact Jenny on bigboyben1@icloud.com.

Please note that Jenny and her husband are shielding at the moment so you may need to make specific arrangements for collection.

Melanie Dew is a new member this year and had been planning to make use of the Association apiary to site her first hive. Under current circumstances, this sadly hasn't been possible so she is offering a site for one or two hives in her garden. She lives in the countryside between Iping and Milland and would love to have bees! If you are interested, please email melanie.dew1@icloud.com

Drone Congregation Areas (DCAs) are physical locations where drones gather during flight. Once the drones leave the colony they will mainly fly at these sites or in transit between them and the hive. The main purpose of these areas is to increase the chance of the queen being able to find numerous mates at one time. They are often between 15 and 40 metres in there are and can be up to 200 metres wide. However, not much else is known about them currently.

I am carrying out some research and attempting to find DCAs around the area. It is proving trickier than first expected as there is no general criteria to suggest where they form yet, making anywhere really a possibility for one to exist. The only one that I know of is one in Selborne, described in Gilbert Whites book "The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne". I am seeking help in that if you know or have an idea where any DCAs may be situated in your area please contact me so that I can go and verify where they are (dylanthebeekeeper@gmail.com). By identifying more specific areas, it will save time compared to looking in every field across Hampshire. Finding them is vital, as beekeepers can easily monitor behaviour in and around the hive but are yet to truly understand the goings on far away from the colony.

Dylan Gussman



This month's Guest Editor is a one-week-old chick who is currently living, with its siblings, in a box on my desk.

Your Committee for 2020/1

Chairman	Graham Rowden	01730 895368
Honorary Secretary	Melanie Espin	01730 823405
Hon Treasurer/Membership Secretary	David Hall	01730 893423
Committee Members: Pippa Barker, Anne Chantal Ballard (Education), Elizabeth Eveleigh (Minutes sec), David Parkinson (Honey Show Mngr), Martin Smyth,		
Apiary Custodians: Graham Rowden, Dean Gregory, Rowan Roberts, Peter Reader, Chris Clark		
Librarian: Martin Smyth		
Newsletter Editor	Helen de Peyrecave depeyrecave@gmail.com	01420 588675

