

# BEE NEWS



Graham and Lynda at Surbiton fair



## Diary Dates

1st fine Saturday in March  
**KBKA Saturday apiary meeting start**

4, 5 & 6 April  
 Spring Convention  
**Harper Adams University**  
**Newport, Shropshire**

26 May  
**Surrey Show**  
**Guildford**

30th October to 1st November  
**National Honey Show**  
**St Georges College Weybridge**

## KBKA helps win award

Regent Street wins a prestigious Crown Estate Urban Sustainability Award in February, of special note the outstanding educational Nature Marquee manned by KBKA members & bees in July 2013



Julie Hogarth  
 receiving the award  
 from Alison Nimmo  
 Chief Executive  
 The Crown Estate

## Apiary Managers' Report

We took a peek in the hives at the Hampton Court Apiary at the end of January and conditions appeared to be very good. The autumn had been very mild and certainly our own bees were flying regularly and there was concern that they would have consumed their stores. However, there was food in abundance so those responsible for feeding had done an excellent job and we just gave candy to two small colonies which were in danger of becoming isolated from their stores.

Despite the extreme rainfall there was only a small damp patch in the metal shed. The repairs have certainly been tested and withstood the torrents. We were fortunate to have taken down the marquee before the real storms hit or even more damage would have been sustained. New poles have been ordered and we hope the weather will have subsided by the start of the season for it to be erected again.

There seems to be another surge of interest in beekeeping and the winter beginners' theory lectures have been fully booked. The practical course is also full and we will need volunteers to run a hive and demonstrate the art of beekeeping. The module 3 pests and diseases winter course has also been well attended and there have been excellent discussions on comb changing and varroa management. Epsom Beekeepers very kindly allowed us to hold two microscopy evenings in their hall and we had a great time 'messaging about with microscopes'. More training is needed in this area and next time we hope to be more specific and dissect a bee expertly. There will also be further training for nosema and acarine testing which we really need to do as an apiary.

Looking forward to the next season, there will be the beginners', intermediate and queen rearing courses. The apiary will open on the first fine Saturday in March and we can only hope that this will not be the third consecutive long cold spring. Please email us and let us know what you would like to do this season!

**Avis and David Marshall**

## The 2013 Committee

### Derek Jones

Chairman  
& SBKA Divisional Representative

### Avis Marshall

Apiary manager  
& training coordinator

### Mike Axford

Art director

### Julie Hogarth

Editor

### Anne Jones

Treasurer

### Martin Kenny

Secretary

### John Legate

Trustee/Surrey Beekeepers  
Association

### David Marshall

### Lynda Mortimer

Membership

### Graham Mortimer

Membership

### Chris Reid

### Andy Watters

### Joanna Wyatt

## Spring Convention

This year's annual beekeeping conference has a large variety of courses and lectures. It is an excellent way to gain knowledge and experience at all levels as well as keeping up with the latest ideas and research. If the accommodation on site does not appeal, Lilleshall is a 15 minute drive away and is a country house set in beautiful gardens with very comfortable rooms. It would be great to have a Kingston contingent again at the Spring Convention.

## SBKA - AGM hosted by Kingston feedback

"As you heard at this afternoons meeting my role as a trustee has to be very neutral not favouring one division over another.

I am therefore entirely without bias in saying that I thought the team from Kingston (the top division!?) did an excellent job in organising the meeting.

From the timings to the cakes (I tried my best to sample them all----but failed), everything went very well" **John Legate**

"Just to add a comment from another neutral trustee – it couldn't have been a better event. Excellent venue, catering, top class speaker, and timed to perfection. Well done to you all." **Bob Maurer**

"As I am not a Trustee I can say with all due prejudice that KBKA did a smashing job!" **Tim Lovett**

## KBKA at the markets and fairs

It now seems rather a long time ago but we had a very successful afternoon at the Thames Ditton Christmas Fair, ably assisted by Julie and Mike. We were a bit apprehensive about having a stall in the open in Thames Ditton High Street but after a slow start we sold all of the Mortimer Ditton Honey, and a good amount of Derek and Hayden's even though it came from 'outside the parish'!

The stalls at Surbiton Festival, Long Ditton Fair, Kingston May Merrie, Wisley "Grow Your Own" etc. are good outlets for members honey and most importantly a good opportunity to educate and inform the general public about honey bees. It is amazing how receptive they are to us 'bee bores'.

Going rate for a 12oz jar of local raw honey seems very acceptable at £6. as opposed to blended honey of unknown provenance at Lidl at £1.89 lb! We hope that members and the KBKA Apiary itself will have plenty of honey to sell in 2014.



## All Chinese honey is ordered off shelves



Food watchdogs have ordered all Chinese-produced honey to be withdrawn from sale after trials found that much of it is contaminated by antibiotics. 40 per cent of the honey sold in the UK comes from China. Tests of 16 pots found that ten contained the powerful antibiotic chloramphenicol.

The chemical is a trigger for aplastic anaemia, a rare but serious blood disorder which affects up to 100 people in Britain each year. It has also been linked to leukaemia. The news comes just two weeks after the Food Standards Agency told leading supermarkets to withdraw specific batches of own-brand honey produced in China which were found to be contaminated with another antibiotic, streptomycin.

The sudden withdrawal of all Chinese honey threatens to cause a UK shortage. Two Tesco Finest Acacia Honey jars tested positive for chloramphenicol. One also contained traces of streptomycin. A pot of Tesco Pure Set Honey also tested positive for both. Two jars of Sainsbury's ownbrand honey and a Gales product tested positive for both. Honey from Rowse, Bee's Queen and Asda also tested positive for at least one of the chemicals. It is understood that the antibiotics are used in sprays by Chinese beekeepers to keep down bacterial infection of beehives.

China's shambolic food safeguards system means there is no proper testing to ensure illegal residues do not get into food. The FSA's original approach was to remove only batches of Chinese honey which tested positive for illegal contaminants. However, it adopted a blanket ban because the problem appears to be so widespread. Concern about potentially harmful residues in Chinese food imports led the EU and Britain to ban all new shipments. But at that stage they did not order recalls of products on shelves. Apart from 11 tonnes of honey, China exports 17,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish and 48 tonnes of rabbit meat to Britain each year. The FSA has convened a meeting of independent scientific experts to assess the risk. It said consumers could use Chinese honey already in their cupboards because the risk was considered 'extremely small'.

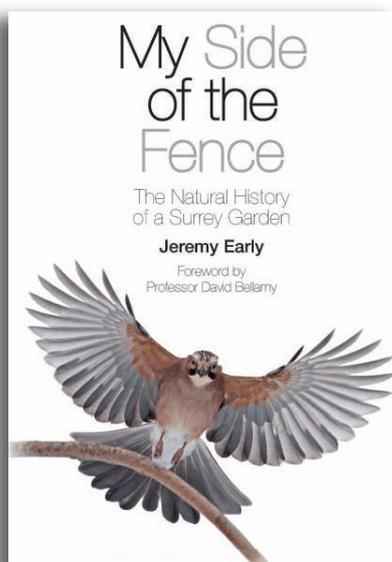




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the author to Surrey Wildlife Trust.



# My Side of the Fence

## The Natural History of a Surrey Garden

By Jeremy Early

The photograph (left) shows a honeybee worker in flight carrying on its hind legs the brilliant orange of collected crocus pollen. This is one of the many superb colour images of bees in his recent book, all from photos taken by him.

Indeed, the only photos in the book not by Jeremy are two black and white ones taken by his parents soon after 1964. This was when they moved into his current house, which borders the southern edge of Reigate Priory Park. The house, which was built in the 1920s, has an attractive, but modest, north-facing garden on sandy soil. The two black and white photos taken by Jeremy's parents show views of the garden in its overgrown state in 1964.

All the other colour photos clearly show the wealth of plant and animal life attracted since the Early family came to live here. The range of plants and animals recorded in this garden over this long period of nearly 50 years is astounding. All are carefully and systematically listed, with the majority not only well described, but also beautifully illustrated.

The book consists of separate chapters on each form of animal life recorded, e.g., Mammals, Birds, The Pond etc. At the end of each chapter is a full list of the different species recorded, e.g., 14 Mammals, and 53 Birds (including a wryneck!) Chapters follow on Butterflies and Moths, Bees, Wasps, Flies, Beetles, and "Other Invertebrates" such as spiders, slugs etc. The book then concludes with a full bibliography, and index.

Most beekeepers will doubtless turn first to the section on Bees, which begins enticingly, "Bees are not only beautiful..." And then continues, "... they are also essential and one of the best indicators of how successful a wildlife-friendly gardener is." This section comprises 25 pages, beautifully illustrated with some 60 colour photos, including two of honeybees. This last detail proves the point made in the text that many more species of bee exist in Britain than is generally realised. As the author points out, the large social bees, the ones best known to us, only represent just over 10% of our total bee fauna. This consists of some 250 species, some as small as 5mm in length, of which 222 have been found in Surrey!

The end of this section lists a total of 82 bee species recorded – 12 social (including honeybees), 52 solitary, & 18 cuckoo bees. This abundance of recordings proves the success of Jeremy (and his parents) in making this a wildlife-friendly garden.

The rest of the book is equally impressive and instructive. Few books focus on individual gardens like this, or have such detailed observations of wildlife so well described and illustrated. If you are at all interested in nature, or want to learn how to attract wildlife into your garden, this book is a must.

Book review by Richard Woodhouse, Reigate BKA



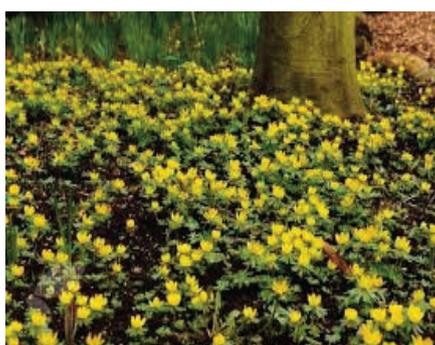
Viburnum Tines



Galanthus Snowdrops



Corylus Haze



Eranthus (Winter Aconite)



Skimmia-japonica-rubella

## Plants to Help Bees through Winter and into Spring

As we know bees need flowers whenever they are active, and we should not forget that they may be out foraging during the next few months. There are very few winter-flowering plants in the wild in Britain, so without our gardens bees would starve.

But what plants should we have in our gardens to help during the coming months? The following list of winter-flowering plants, mainly from January to April are recommendations from our 'resident horticultural advisor' Coral Lloyd.

- Viburnum Tines, Bodnantense and Farreri. All flower from November-March.
- Galanthus Snowdrops. Flower between January and April; said to be heavily foraged by bees, mainly for pollen.
- Tulips lots of species, produce a lot of pollen, but are not much used by bees.
- Corylus Hazel, catkins good for pollen
- Garrya also catkins for pollen.
- Alders, catkins for pollen.
- Salix Goat or Palm Willow. Flower between February-March.
- Pendula, pollen on male trees only.
- Pulmonaria (Lungwort), Generally flowers later February-May, bumble bees love it but I have never seen a honey bee foraging it.
- Mahonia, (Oregon Grape) species Aquifolium (Common Holly), Media, and Japonica. Flower between December-March.
- Hellebores, Niger (Christmas Rose) is heavily foraged by honey and bumble bees, the Helleborus Orientalis (Lenten Rose) is also foraged.
- Eranthus (Winter Aconite). Flowers between December-March. Good for pollen and nectar.
- Crocus. All species heavily worked for pollen.
- Cheiranthus, (Wallflowers). Flower a bit later, March-May, but heavily foraged by bees.
- Clematis Cirrhosis, Alpine and Armandii. Flowers December-February, mainly used for pollen.
- Skimmia, again a bit later, male plants for pollen, male and female for nectar.

All these plants are noted in **The Bee Friendly Garden** book by *Ted Hooper & Mike Taylor*, so they should be sources of forage for bees.