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THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



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**December
2014**

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Divisional Meetings

December 2014 & January 2015

4 Dec	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	Christmas party & AGM preparation. Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
5 Dec	Friday 8.00pm	Romford	Christmas Social. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, RM2 5EL
11 Dec	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	Christmas Social at Chingford Horticultural Hall. Epping Forest members free—charge for others.
14 Dec	Sunday From 1pm	Southend	Christmas Drinks, etc at The Roebuck PH Rayleigh. From 1pm until whenever, family and friends welcome, They serve food. Nothing formal arranged - it is simply a case of turn up and join in the banter.
15 Dec	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	Social Meeting - The Link, Trinity Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford
17 Dec	Wednesday 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Members Meeting. The Norton PH. Cold Norton CM3 6JE
19 Dec	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	Christmas Social Evening. Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY
8 Jan	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	Annual General Meeting - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
9 Jan	Friday 8.00pm	Romford	Annual General Meeting - Chadwick Hall, Main Road, RM2 5EL
15 Jan	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	Annual General Meeting - Chingford Horticultural Hall
21 Jan	Wednesday 8.00pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Annual General Meeting. The Norton PH, Cold Norton CM3 6JE
22 Jan	Thursday 7.00pm	Colchester	Annual General meeting and Social Evening. Langham Community Centre. Light buffet provided, please bring drink & glasses. Note earlier start time.
28 Jan	Wednesday	Southend	Annual General Meeting - WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh
30 Jan	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	Annual General Meeting - Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY

Who's who and how to contact them

President of EBKA *Eric Fenner* Hon Member BBKA Hon CLM EBKA

Trustees:

Chairman: *Richard Ridler*, Old Barn House, 36, Walden Road, Saffron Walden, Essex. CB10 2LF. email chair@ebka.org tel. 01799 218 023

Secretary: *Michael Webb* 19 Ingrebourne Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 1BQ email gsecebka@virginmedia.com tel. 01708 250 606 / 07712 490 511

Treasurer: *Bob Manning* 12, Moorland Close, Collier Row, RM5 2AB email treasurer@ebka.org tel: 01708 760 770

Divisional Trustees:

Braintree	<i>James Jolley</i>	mrjolley@live.co.uk
Chelmsford	<i>Richard Alabone</i>	r.alabone@sky.com
Colchester	<i>Lee Bartrip</i>	leebartrip@gmail.com
Dengie Hundred & Maldon	<i>Glenn Mayes</i>	trustee@dmbka.org.uk
Epping Forest	<i>Ian Nichols</i>	ian@iannichols.demon.co.uk
Harlow	<i>Mike Barke</i>	mjbarke@googlemail.com
Romford	<i>Pádraig Floyd</i>	psafloyd@yahoo.com
Saffron Walden	<i>Janice Grieve</i>	janicegrieve@gmail.com
Southend	<i>Marguerita Wilson</i>	philandritawilson@sky.com

Divisional Contacts:

To contact a local Division:

Braintree: Colleen Chamberlain 01279 876 333 **Chelmsford:** Brian Spencer 01245 490 843
Colchester: Morag Chase 01206 522 576 **D.H. & Maldon:** Carlie Mayes 01245 381 577
Harlow: Nick Holmes 07730 735 752 **Epping Forest:** Robin Harman 07971 237 312
Romford: Pat Allen 01708 220 897 **Saffron Walden:** Jane Ridler 01799 218 023
Southend: Chad Colby-Blake 01702 302 209

EBKA Education Contact:

Jane Ridler Old Barn House, 36 Walden Road Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2LF 01799 218 023 jane.ridler@uwclub.net

The Essex Beekeeper Magazine:

Editor: Jean Smye, email: jsmye@sky.com
Advertising: Jean Smye email: jsmye@sky.com tel. 07731 856 361
Web site: Nick Holmes email: webmaster@essexbeekeepers.com
Distribution and Mailing Secretary: Mary Heyes tel. 01702 588 009 email: ml.heyas@virgin.net

Regional Bee Inspectors for EBKA Region:

Epping Forest and Romford Divisions (excluding Brentwood):
 Julian Parker julian.parker@fera.gsi.gov.uk tel. 07775 119 469

All other Divisions:
 Keith Morgan keith.morgan@fera.gsi.gov.uk tel. 01485 520 838 or 07919 004 215

Cleaning wax – Stage 2

Wax for the show bench, be it in the form of a block, candles or a model should, ideally, be light primrose in colour. The colour of beeswax is largely determined by its propolis content, so if you wish to end up with a light coloured block, only choose cappings or comb to be melted in Stage 1 that is pale in colour and free from 'travel staining' - bee footprints. Show wax too, needs to have a greater degree of purity and this is achieved by further filtering. I have calibrated my Rayburn cooker using a digital display thermocouple, (available from Maplin Electronics) and can select an oven setting that cycles in the range 64-70°C.

The wax blocks from Stage 1 are melted / filtered in the oven through lint (fluffy side up) using a small two-part stainless steel steamer; the bottom section contains rainwater to catch the wax filtering through the disc of lint cut to shape to fit the base of the top section. The processing of 8oz or so of wax at a time takes some six hours and is best done overnight to avoid competing demands for the cooker! The resulting cake of cooled wax is noticeably a better colour than the original 1oz blocks and the lint clearly shows that a surprising amount of debris has been removed. There is no way round the fact that some wax is retained / soaked up by the lint, but the impregnated disc makes a wonderful fire-lighter! Perfectionists might wish to filter the cake a further time through a fresh piece of lint. Note: if not sourced using the internet, lint in useful 18" wide rolls can be obtained through your local pharmacist.

I have four plastic buckets for wax labelled:

- 'To Clean' (bits and scrapings),
- 'To Keep' (for further filtering or to sell on 'as is'),
- 'To Show' (to be transformed into candles, etc), and
- 'To Exchange' (for foundation)

I find that all china, glass and metal utensils are best cleaned by heating them in the oven until any wax liquefies and then quickly wiping them with disposable kitchen towel – indispensable when processing wax. Alternatively, boiling water from a kettle can be poured over the items and the 'washings' retained in an old bucket or similar; take care that melted / liquid wax does not find its way down the household drains. Sticky-Stuff Remover (available from Lakeland Plastics or Aldi) is not only magic for removing adhesive labels from old jars or lids (would I ever?!) but also quickly dissolves / cleans wax film from cooker tops and tiled kitchen floors – hopefully before the 'other half' notices.



Braintree Division is planning to run a coach to the Harper Adams University for the

Spring Convention on Saturday 18th April 2015.

A deposit of £5 will be required and we will need to know numbers **by the end of December** to book the appropriate size vehicle.

Please contact Stuart Mitson
01376 340 683



Beebooks Lending Library

There is now a webpage where you will find a list of all the books in our library available for you to borrow. Many are excellent works which are currently out of print. Most are on the reading list for BBKA module exams.

www.essexbeekeepers.com

**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
and a
PROSPEROUS 2015 TO ALL EBKA MEMBERS**

Cover Photograph:

Paul F. Abbott of Southend Division being presented on 30 October with the Dodd Cup at the 2014 National Honey Show for the highest number of points in Classes 181 - 192.

Possible EU ban of 40 pesticides

The EU's decision to ban the use of some pesticides could threaten UK crops, increase food prices and hit farmers' profits, a report has claimed. The report commissioned by three farming bodies said the EU was on course to "ban" use of 40 chemicals by 2020 to reduce environmental damage. It said this could lead to a surge in pests, affecting production of apples, carrots and peas, among other crops. Conservation groups said reducing pesticides would help the environment. The independent report was carried out by business consultants Andersons and jointly commissioned by the National Farmers' Union (NFU), the Crop Protection Association (CPA) and the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC).

The European Parliament voted in 2009 to tighten rules on pesticide use and ban at least 22 chemicals deemed harmful to human health. The move banned substances that could cause cancer or harm human reproduction or hormones. At the time, the UK government, the Conservatives and the NFU all opposed the new rules, saying they could hit yields and increase food prices. The report said that as current licences lapsed and tighter rules meant they would not be re-approved, some 40 chemicals would be banned within the next decade.

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Write for our new list in December

Cleaning Beeswax

Douglas Nethercleft – Warwickshire BKA (via *ebees*)

Herewith a few 'small scale' techniques that I use when preparing wax for selling or showing. I do not attempt to reclaim wax from old black comb and gone are the days when I used discarded ladies' tights and old tin cans for filtering! Beware of copper, brass and aluminium utensils which will readily discolour wax; only use stainless steel, china, glass and plastic – albeit care has to be taken not to melt the latter inadvertently!

Cleaning wax – Stage 1

Place odd pieces/brace comb/cappings etc., in a container floating in water heated in a slow cooker; you may choose to wash the wax first under a tap to remove any 'stickiness'. The first of the various waxes that are present in comb starts to melt at 64°C; beeswax will progressively darken if heated to temperatures greater than 70°C. Keep an eye on the wax and when it has just all melted its temperature will be less than 70°C. Remove the container from the slow cooker and carefully pour the wax through a relatively coarse meshed metal kitchen sieve held above a warm china or glass jug covered with a nappy liner folded in two (fixed with an elastic band), which acts as a fine filter. Nappy liners can be obtained from Boots. Stop pouring the wax before reaching the water / condensate that will be at the bottom of the container. Pour the remainder, including any water, through the sieve but now into a plastic cream carton (or similar) covered with a folded nappy liner; the mix will separate out on cooling. The resultant disc of wax needs hardly any scraping to remove impurities at the water / wax interface. Straightaway, whilst the sieve contents are still warm, discard the detritus into a waste bin. Similarly, whilst it is still warm, wipe out the wax container with kitchen roll.

Next, pour the liquid wax content of the jug into plastic 5 x 1oz 'BEESWAX' tray moulds. This wax will be free from any visible impurities and, if the resultant blocks are not kept for further filtering, can be used / sold on for use in polish, lotions and potions containing beeswax. Note: the BEESWAX trays will distort and not be useable for moulding blocks for show if the wax poured into them is more than 70°C. If there is no better paying outlet for surplus wax, then it can always be traded in for foundation.

Repairing Woodpecker damage -

Suggested method of repairing holes made by Woodpeckers in brood boxes:-

Place a board over the hole on the inside of the box, wedged in place with a batten from the other side of the box with a sheet of paper between board & hive. Now mix a little 'Evostic' wood glue with some damp sawdust. Mix and press into the hole. Leave for a few days before removing the board. The paper is to stop the plug from sticking to the board. Any hole, any size, any shape can be repaired in this way.

"Simple" Jim Griffiths

Damaged Brood Box caused by Green Woodpecker



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The report claimed the changes would affect:

- Potatoes: Many fungicides controlling blight would be banned. Predicted yield loss - 12% ·
- Wheat: Fungicides helping to control rust and mildew would be banned. Predicted yield loss - 12% ·
- Onions: Mildew and a rotting disease called botrytis are currently held back by chemicals likely to be banned. Predicted yield loss - 50% ·
- Apples: Main issue is "scab". The chemical likely to be outlawed holds back skin browning and blemishes, and growers are worried consumers will not buy imperfect-looking fruit.

Alongside the impact on crops, the report suggested it could cause a drop in farming profits of £1.7bn, more imports and higher food prices. Nick von Westenholz, CPA chief executive officer, said the report provided "a clear picture of the implications of the flawed system that governs pesticide use in the EU". NFU vice-president Guy Smith said EU restrictions were having a "negative impact" on UK food production. "It is absolutely essential that farmers have regulation that is risk-based and that it follows sound science to ensure the farming sector keeps growing and contributing to the £97bn UK food and drink industry," he said. "For this to happen we need government at both UK and EU level to put British food production at the heart of policymaking across all government departments." David Hutchinson, AIC strategy group member, said: "This report highlights the serious effects of policy and regulatory decisions that are not based on sound science." He said science "often came second", adding: "In the meantime farming and the wider economy of our food industry will continue to suffer and be placed at an ever increasing competitive disadvantage to those countries outside the EU."

A spokesman for the European Commission said the new rules were introduced to "ensure a high level of protection for human and animal health, the environment, whilst safeguarding the competitiveness of EU agriculture". He said the Commission was carrying out an impact assessment and would consider the findings of the Andersons study. But he added: "An initial assessment of this study suggests that the predicted losses are overestimated."

Several conservation groups were critical of the report. Keith Tyrell, of the Pesticide Action Network, said it was "scaremongering nonsense" and farmers were "crying wolf". **He said a bigger threat to apples and other flowering crop yields was the "likelihood" that pesticides were killing pollinators like bees. Friends of the Earth nature campaigner Paul de Sylva said: "Intensive use of chemicals is harming bees and other wildlife and the quality of our water and soils. That is the real threat to food security."**

A spokesperson for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said: "We agree that pesticides need regulating to ensure people and the environment are protected - but decisions must be based on the real risks so our farmers are not needlessly stopped from using appropriate products to protect their crops. That's why we are continuing to press for improvements in the way Europe regulates pesticides and pushing for a standard approach across the European Union."

Some independent commentators on food and farming said pesticides were a "necessary evil" to produce cheap food. Consumers must decide if some environmental damage was the price they were willing to pay for low bills at the checkout", they said.

Tom Heap
BBC Radio4 - Today programme
21 October 2014
via ebees

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Class 102 - 2 jars medium honey	2nd	Romford Division	
Class 105 - 2 jars set honey	3rd	Class 182 - 2 jars light honey	3rd
Class 181 - frame for extracting	3rd	Terry Watson - Romford	
Class 183 - 2 jars medium honey	VHC	Class 185 - 3 jars different honey	2nd
Class 189 - 1 jar gift honey	2nd	Class 241 - 2 jars light or med. honey	3rd
Class 192 - 3 not moulded candles	1st		
Class 194 - sweet mead	1st		
Class 242 - 2 jars set honey	2nd		

Congratulations to you all.

Did you know ?

Flying is difficult for Bumble Bees

In flight a bumble bee flaps its wings 200 times per second (which equals 12,000 rpm), roughly equivalent to the speed of a high-revving motorbike engine. This generates a lot of heat, but of course comes at a cost: Bumble bee flight is enormously expensive in terms of the energy that it uses.



A running man uses up the calories in a Mars bar in about one hour. A man-sized bumblebee would exhaust the same calories in less than thirty seconds.

Hummingbirds are often thought of as having exceptionally high metabolic rates, but a bumble bee's is roughly 75% higher. This explains an awful lot about the biology and conservation of bumble bees. They have to eat almost continually to keep warm; a bumble bee with a full stomach is only ever about forty minutes from starvation. If a bumble bee runs out of energy, she cannot fly, and if she cannot fly, she cannot get to flowers to get more food, so she is doomed. But give her a teaspoon of honey, and with a stomach full of sugar she can start to fire up her flight muscles, shivering them to produce heat, and once she gets up to about 30°C, off she goes.

courtesy of Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW REPORT & ESSEX RESULTS

Jim McNeill NHS rep.

This year we had 13 members exhibiting and they all did very well, the country knows Essex produces fine honey. There were 4 members from Romford, 2 from Chelmsford, 2 from Braintree, 2 from Harlow, 1 from Colchester, 1 from Epping Forest and 1 from Southend. Well done to you all. This year's show was a big one - **1720 entries** from 246 exhibitors, which was just over 400 more exhibits than previously, so to get any award you have done very well. Here is the full list of winners.

P. Abbott - Southend

Class 54 - photomicrograph **1st**
 Class 121 - 2 jars light honey **1st**
 Class 124 - 2 jars set honey C
 Class 126 - frame for extracting VHC
 Class 131 - 1 jar gift honey 3rd
 Class 132 - 1 jar set honey gift **1st**
 Class 182 - 2 jars light honey VHC
 Class 183 - 2 jars medium honey 2nd
 Class 184 - 2 jars dark honey 3rd
 Class 185 - 3 jars different honey 3rd
 Class 190 - 1 piece of beeswax 2nd
 Class 191 - 3 moulded candles 2nd
 Class 192 - 3 not moulded candles 2nd
 Class 193 - 1 bottle dry mead 3rd
 Class 194 - 1 bottle sweet mead 2nd

Fiona Adedotun - Colchester

Class 190 - 1 pece of beeswax **1st**

Pat Allen - Romford

Class 72-2 jars med honey 3rd
 Class 76 - 2 jars set honey HC
 Class 181 - frame for extracting **1st**
 Class 183 - 2 jars medium honey 3rd
 Class 186 - 2 jars set honey C
 Class 189 - 1 jar honey gift VHC
 Class 241 - 2 jars light or med. honey VHC

Mike Barke - Harlow

Class 186 - 2 jars set honey 2nd
 Class 193 - 1 bttle dry mead HC

J. Dutney

Class 182 - 2 jars light honey **1st**
 Class 189 - 1 jar honey gift **1st**

Eric Fenner - Harlow & Chelmsford

Class 182 - 2 jars light honey 2nd
 Class 186 - 2 jars set honey 3rd

Janet French - Braintree

Class 110 - 2 containers cut comb **1st**
 Class 182 - 2 jars light honey HC
 Class 183 - 2 jars medium honey HC
 Class 187 - 2 jars chunk honey **1st**
 Class 188 - 1 container cut comb 2nd

Walter Gee - Chelmsford

Class 185 - 3 jars different honey **1st**
 Class 191 - 3 moulded candles VHC

John Lacy

Class 2 - 2 jars gift honey VHC
 Class 17 - 2 jars naturally set 3rd
 Class 72 - 2 jars medium honey gift VHC
 Class 75 - 2 jars nat. set honey gift VHC
 Class 183 - 2 jars medium honey **1st**
 Class 186 - 2 jars set honey **1st**
 Class 189 - 1 jar honey gift 3rd

Jim Mcneill - Romford

Class 1 - 24 jars of honey C
 Class 6 - 2 jars set honey 3rd
 Class 16 - 2 jars set honey **1st**
 Class 76 - 2 jars set honey gift 2nd
 Class 102 - 2 jars medium honey 2nd

con't overleaf

Advertisement

Making soap and cosmetics with beeswax and honey

with Dr Sara Robb

Making honey soap can be very satisfying and does not need to involve waiting months or even weeks curing time before you use the soap.

Soap making is not difficult using Sara's no-cure method; you do not need any special equipment and can use your honey soap the day you make it — no waiting for the soap to cure. Dr Sara will demonstrate her recipe, which is as easy as making a cake, and can be used on the same day!

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How Do You Melt Your Honey?

Most beekeepers extract their honey and then store it in bulk — which can be anything from a honey bucket holding between 7 lbs and 60 lbs (yes, I do know someone who uses buckets that hold 60lbs!), right up to barrels that hold 661lbs (or 300kg). The benefit of storing in bulk is that you are then able to prepare good clear honey, with a reasonable shelf life, or smooth set honey that does not frost.

If you just bottle it when you extract then it will not be long before you have jars of set honey that will almost certainly frost, probably have a coarse grain, and bend the spoon when you (or your customers) try to dig it out. So, you have stored it in bulk, but now have to melt it.

Commercially, barrels are either put into a hot room to melt, or are laid on their sides on bars in a melting 'oven' with their bungs removed; the honey then drains out and is pumped to processing tanks as it melts.

Clearly this is neither practical nor necessary for the small-scale beekeeper.

Traditionally, hobby beekeepers have made some sort of insulated box to hold one, or a number of honey buckets and usually heated them with an electric light bulb of what they think is an appropriate wattage to melt the honey. This arrangement is not satisfactory for a number of reasons e.g.:

- There is little control over the actual temperature
- The honey may well be overheated
- Light bulbs can produce hotspots with a risk of fire
- Hotspots may cause the bucket to melt with disastrous consequences
- Light bulbs do not last long in a confined area as they overheat and burn out.

There are much better alternatives and, although commercially made warming cabinets tend to be quite expensive, it is not difficult to make a really good one yourself if you have a few basic DIY skills

You will need:

An insulated box. You can make this from, for example, scrap timber and then line it with some form of insulation such as polystyrene or Cellotex; skips – the beekeeper's happy hunting ground – can often yield everything needed! An alternative is to use an old fridge or freezer, although you need to be aware that a very tall one will get much hotter at the top unless you install a small fan to circulate the air. I have an old chest freezer that holds eight buckets comfortably and works very well. You will need something for the buckets to stand on, leaving room for the heat source below; I made a removable slatted floor out of 2"x1" resting on a couple of 4"x2" bearers – rather like a pallet.

Heat source. This is the easy bit. Low wattage tubular heaters are available and some are very reasonably priced. I bought two, each 3 ft long and rated at 135 W for less than £20 each; they give a gentle well-spread heat with no hot spots. Given their exceptionally long life, they will probably cost less than all those light bulbs in the long run. They are available from 'trade' style electrical outlets.

Thermostatic controller. This is the most important part as it is essential to control the temperature accurately. For many years I used a home-made controller. It worked well but recently came to the end of its life. The search for a suitable replacement took a considerable amount of time as many did not give the accurate control needed, or they were very expensive. Eventually I found the perfect model – small and neat, easily programmed, 2 metre long wire to the small temperature probe, temperature control between -50C and 99C, a resolution of 0.1C, and the temperature variation from the set temperature adjustable from 0.3C to 10C. The unit is capable of handling a heater drawing up to 10 amps — more than enough for my heaters which draw just over 1 amp. The price? Just £17.99 post free — and it was delivered next day from *ebay*. A simple internet search for 'Digital thermostat temperature controller with probe 220V 10A' should bring up similar devices.

Peter Edwards and Stratford on Avon BKA courtesy of eBEES