

# THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



**Still on the flowers in late November**

Photograph by Jean Smye

## **Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association**

*Registered Charity number 1031419*

*Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex*

**No. 612**

[www.essexbeekeepers.com](http://www.essexbeekeepers.com)

**December  
2015**

## EBKA Divisional Meetings

### Diary dates for December 2015 & January 2016

<b>3 Dec</b>	Thursday 8.00pm	<b>Harlow</b>	<b>Christmas Party</b> - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
<b>4 Dec</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Romford</b>	Christmas Social - Chadwick Hall, St. Michaels Church, Main Road, Gidea Park, Romford RM2 5EL
<b>11 Dec</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	Christmas social Evening - bring nibbles. Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY
<b>13 Dec</b>	Sunday 1.00pm	<b>Southend</b>	<b>Christmas Social.</b> The Roebuck, 138 High Street, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 7BU
<b>16 Dec</b>	7.30pm	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	<b>Christmas Bring and Buy</b> - Ulting CM9 6QX
<b>17 Dec</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Epping Forest</b>	<b>Christmas Social</b> - Chingford Horticultural Hall
<b>20 Jan</b>	Wednesday 7.30	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> -The Oak House, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
<b>27 Jan</b>	Wednesday 7.30pm	<b>Southend</b>	<b>'Preparing for Honey Shows'</b> Jim McNeill Rayleigh W I hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 6EE
<b>28 Jan</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b> - Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY

**Note to Secretaries:      Please inform the Editor of the details of your Divisional Monthly Meeting so that it can be included in these listings      Deadline: 4th of the preceding month**

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

## **EBKA Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)**

**Notice is hereby given of an EGM to be held at 6.30pm on  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at :**

**Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM1 2XB**

**To approve an update and minor revision to the Rules of the EBKA.**

**Details of the proposed changes to the Rules can be found on  
the EBKA Website. For members who wish to have a copy of  
the changes, please contact the EBKA Secretary.**

**Michael Webb, Secretary EBKA**

**[gsecebka@virginmedia.com](mailto:gsecebka@virginmedia.com)**

**Tel No: 01708 250606      mobile: 0771 249 0511**

**December 2015**

### **Show Secretary**

The Honey Show Committee has two secretaries and there is a vacancy for one to work alongside the remaining secretary Jim McNeil. The role involves organising four meetings of the committee each year, co-ordinating volunteers to help at the annual show and preparing for the show.

Please contact Michael Webb at

**[gsecebka@virginmedia.com](mailto:gsecebka@virginmedia.com)**

if you are interested.

## Good Customer Service - an Appreciation

Ian Grant - Chelmsford Division

I have been bee keeping since 2004 and always used WBC hives more recently converting to 14" x 12" brood boxes. That set up suits me fine.

Like most bee keepers I do not like spending money so when I decided to replace all six of my roofs it was a big decision but being the son of a carpenter I do have the tools and most wood working skills.

I checked the journals and various web sites and settled for a company in Scotland called Caddon Hives. I bought six flat packed roofs which cost me £34 each plus carriage. The framework was red cedar with plywood pitched roofs and galvanized metal covers. I enjoyed making them up. You learn everything from assembling the first one which makes the rest easy. Importantly, when I nailed the metal onto the pitched roof I drilled both the metal and the edge of the ply to avoid any splitting. I replaced my old roofs with the new ones ready for the winter.

During my first inspection the following Spring I noticed that on one of the hives the ply was beginning to de-laminate.

No problem, using water proof PVA and clamps I did the repair.



Delamination of ply



Undergoing repair

However, it soon became clear that all the roofs were affected in the same manner so there was clearly a "not fit for purpose" problem. I emailed Caddon Hives with a photograph showing the problem. There was an immediate reply expressing regret and that the supplier of the ply was at fault and red cedar replacements would be sent to me as soon as these became available.

I had to wait several weeks, again, due to the supplier of the red cedar. Then in July a large parcel arrived from Caddon Hives which to my surprise, and delight, contained six entire roofs, not just a red cedar section replacing the faulty ply, so that everything was now made of red cedar. How about that for customer service !!!

There was a further “blip” to the proceedings when I noticed that no ventilation cones had been included. Again, an email to Caddon Hives produced another package with twelve cones and six sets of nails, pins and screws. I have now remade my six roofs and replaced the originals at both my apiaries.

I want to publicly thank Caddon Hives for sorting out a problem which was not of their making but a supplier producing plywood to be used as a roof which was not water proof.

At no time did Caddon Hives suggest I was at fault by my method of construction. There is now, of course, a post script particularly relevant to all WBC believers, if you need a roof and you do not mind a bit of carpentry get in touch me, as I would love the original six roofs to be repaired and put to good use on someone else's apiary.



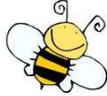
Contact: Ian Grant iancgrant@btinternet.com



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Regards, Honey Helperrrs**



## MICROSCOPY TRAINING DAYS

Graham Royle NDB

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016

at Writtle College, Chelmsford

Full laboratory facilities

£19 (subject to numbers)

This training is part funded by the CEC and so representation from all Divisions is desirable. At the time of writing there are a few places left but no-one from Epping Forest or Maldon has applied yet. This is an opportunity to learn to diagnose your bees' diseases (and other skills) from a national expert! Please email me [jane.ridler@uwclub.net](mailto:jane.ridler@uwclub.net) . If you have a preference for Sat/Sun, please let me know.

Jane Ridler Education Secretary EBKA

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## Keep it Clean

**Celia Davis - Warwickshire Beekeeper - via eBees**

A practical article this month about hygiene, but when we consider hygiene, it is worth bearing in mind the activities of the bees in maintaining their own healthy environment. The hive is essentially a clean place and worker bees are very industrious little cleaners, constantly licking surfaces. Small amounts of hydrogen peroxide, an antiseptic, are produced by the breakdown of glucose by the enzyme glucose oxidase from the bees' hypopharyngeal glands, this gets into the saliva of the bees and so into the general hive environment.

The second really important substance is propolis. Yes, I know, it's sticky and messy and hard to clean off ourselves and our equipment, but it is a very important substance, which is antibacterial, antifungal and probably antiviral as well. The more work that is done on propolis, the more we recognise its importance and we should be pleased if our bees are liberal propolis users, as mine are. So the bees are pretty good but how can we help them? Why should we help them? The answer to this is that we are keeping them in an artificial situation where their normal precautions are probably not adequate. Inside our hives a burden of pathogens builds up and this adds to the stress the bees suffer and makes them more prone to get sick.

There are three components to a hive:

- The boxes
- The frames
- The comb

All of these need to be cleaned at intervals.

### **The boxes:**

The brood box needs to be taken out of use periodically. The time interval varies and some beekeepers do this every year, others do it every three years or so. Put the frames in a clean box and clean the old one by scraping well and then singeing with a blow torch. We'll come back to this.

### **The frames:**

Brood frames may be stripped of their old wax and scraped well, then cleaned thoroughly in very, very hot washing soda solution. Alternatively, quite a few beekeepers have reached the conclusion that frames are better burned and replaced. It is really a question of whether time is more important than money and whether you have access to a boiler of some sort for cleaning them. Again, how long you keep them is a personal decision.

### **The comb:**

Old comb is a repository for pathogens and chemicals. The latter (particularly Varroa treatments), are often soluble in wax and other oils. It needs to be replaced at least every three years in my opinion, but many beekeepers, especially those in disease hotspots, replace it all every year. Clearly, if you are not recycling frames, the whole lot can be burned, but otherwise the wax can be stripped out and burned. This is a much better solution than trying to salvage a bit of grubby wax out of them.

### **Doing the job efficiently:**

A Bailey comb change is ideal (See details in the *Essex Beekeeper* - May 2014) The queen is put (on her frame) in the top box which is then filled with foundation. With the eke and queen excluder in place. the bottom entrance can be blocked off. Feeding is vital. After three weeks the bottom box is removed for cleaning and the top box is dropped down onto a clean floor. The old comb can be removed.

Originally designed as a Nosema control by Leslie Bailey, this method puts the bees into a clean environment without loss of brood. Where there are real disease problems the shook swarm may be a better solution, removing all the brood, along with the frames.

### **Fumigating with ethanoic (acetic) acid:**

We saw earlier that boxes could be sterilized by scorching with a blowtorch and this is the method used by Bee Inspectors when treating disease outbreaks, but it is not possible for single frames and certainly not combs, so there is another method which can be used:

The frames and boxes must be well scraped clean first then fumigated by stacking up boxes, with their frames, and putting a pad or dish containing 150ml of 80% ethanoic acid on top of the frames. A number of boxes can be stacked together but must be sealed up. I use wheelie bin liners to enclose them. The acid attacks metal, concrete and humans, so **take care** where it is all put (outside) and protect yourself with gloves and goggles. Avoid breathing the fumes. Leave the stack for one week then dismantle, dispose of the pads and air the equipment well. This can work well for relatively new comb, which is in good condition.

Winter is a good time to make a start on cleaning those boxes which are lurking in the bee shed. Then next Spring they are ready to have their new foundation in ready for the Bailey comb changes or shook swarms. Keeping everything clean will really benefit your bees and result in better, healthier colonies.

Happy scraping!



## National Honey Show Results 2015, cont'd

Jim McNeill					
Class			Class		
4	12 jars of Honey	HC	241	2 jars Med Honey	3rd
76	2 jars Set Honey	2nd	242	2 jars Set Honey	1st
105	2 jars Set Honey	2nd			
183	2 jars med Honey	1st			
185	3 jars different honey	2nd	183	2 jars med Honey	3rd
192	3 not moulded Candles	2nd	186	2 jars Set Honey	VHC
194	Bottle Sweet Mead	1st	189	1 jar Liquid Honey	1st

### Romford Division

## 2015 National Honey Show Report

Well done to all the members who won prizes at the show this year, winning anything this year was even harder with very nearly 2000 exhibits - a record amount this year - and many more from different countries this year than is usual. We had 15 Essex members entering which is a lot more than in the past, so it's nice to see a few very new members having a go, so don't be put off if you did not win this year, next year might be your year.

Paul Abbott (Southend-on-Sea Division) won both the Essex cups and 5 of the 7 Kent cups as he is a full member of Kent beekeepers as well, so very well done Paul. There was a lot of new names and faces collecting cups this year. The show was in a new part of the college with exhibits in different rooms, which the judges liked it as it gave them more room to work in.

Jim McNeill - EBKA National Honey Show Delegate

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## 2016 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### The EBKA AGM

is to be held on

**Saturday 12 March**  
at 2pm in Room EO6 at Writtle College  
Lordship Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 3RP

### The Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture

is to be held on

**Sunday 17 April**  
at 2pm at the Coach House, Marks Hall  
Coggeshall CO6 1TG.

The speakers for this prestigious inaugural event are  
**Clive de Bruyn and Margaret Thomas**

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## BRAINTREE HONEY SHOW RESULTS

Braintree Division's first proper Honey Show was well supported with 23 members entering with 65 entries. We had a wide representation of the beekeeper's craft as you can see from the results table overleaf. Judging by Jim McNeill took place in the afternoon followed by presentations of awards and a buffet in the evening. During the presentations, Jim explained how each class was judged and gave some good pointers for next year.

The event was inspirational and some new members will be entering the National Honey Show following their success at the Braintree Show.

<b>Class</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Third</b>
1. Two jars light clear honey	Barbara Neale	Not awarded	Judi & Jon Kemp
2. Two jars medium clear honey	Vi Taylor	Pat Rowland	Joint third: Alison & Geoff Brewer Brian Greenland
3. Two jars crystal-lised or soft set honey	Neil Reeve	Vi Taylor	Maurice Bacon
4. Four jars of honey as for sale – clear	Karen Peachey	Pat Rowland	Bridget Mudd
5. Four jars of honey as for sale – soft set	Neil Reeve	Not awarded	Maurice Bacon
6. One container of cut comb	Maurice Bacon	Angela Boyle	Not awarded
7. Block of beeswax	Vi Taylor	Pat Rowland	Stuart Mitson
8. Two beeswax candles produced by any method	Vi Taylor	Maurice Bacon	Elsbeth Bunting
9. Photograph relating to bees/beekeeping	Janet French	Pat Rowland	Alison & Geoff Brewer
10. Honey cake	Karen Peachey	Elsbeth Bunting	Lesley Guy

### Special Awards:

<b>Cups and medals</b>	<b>Name of Exhibitor</b>
Best Exhibit in Show – Cup	Vi Taylor – for Block of Wax
Class 4 - 1st place – Medal	Karen Peachey
Class 5 - 1st place – Medal	Neil Reeve

## Making a BDI Claim - Would you know what to do?

Roy Cropley

A recent outbreak of EFB on the Essex/Herts border highlighted the issue that not all members of the BDI insurance scheme know what to do if the need arises to make a claim.

Claim timing is vital. BDI are unlikely to meet your claim if it is not made within a month. When your colonies are destroyed the Bee Inspector needs to issue you with a form stating your losses - bees, equipment and honey. Bee Inspectors are busy people so you might need to give gentle reminder.

Tips:

1. Make a note in your diary of the date the bees were destroyed.
2. Ideally, get the appropriate form from the Bee Inspector immediately.
3. When your Divisional Treasurer emails your insurance certificate after renewal of the annual subscription, keep it in a safe place - just in case.
4. Make sure you are adequately insured for the number of colonies you have or are anticipating that year.
5. Send your form and BDI certificate to:  
Bernard Diaper BDI Claims Manager  
57 Marfield Close,  
Walmley, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1YD  
Tel: 07711 456 932  
email: [Bernard.Diaper@beediseaseinsurances.co.uk](mailto:Bernard.Diaper@beediseaseinsurances.co.uk)  
It might be advisable when posting to use the 'to be signed for' method.
6. Make a note of when you sent off your claim.

### ***Bee Craft's done it again!***

I'm sure you will forgive me for taking this opportunity to 'boast' a little about our Gold medal award at the world's Beekeeping Congress, Apimondia. We have retained this coveted award for the second congress in succession in the popular beekeeping journal category, and believe we are the only beekeeping magazine to have been awarded Gold on three separate occasions. Naturally everyone associated with *Bee Craft* is delighted, not least because we are such a small team.

*Bee Craft's* story begins in 1919 when Kent Beekeepers' Association launched the publication as a county beekeeping journal. By 1928 thirteen Associations had come in one by one. In 1947 *Bee Craft* became the official journal of the BBKA and by 1948 was considered a national rather than local journal.

At the present time 49 county and district associations have shareholdings in *Bee Craft* Ltd. It is a 'not for profit' organisation and the day to day management of the company is vested in a board of directors who are elected at the AGM, supported by a team of consultants.

Our aim is to care for the well being of the honeybee by supporting the education and training of new beekeepers and those wishing to advance their skills and qualifications. Our BKids club encourages and informs the next generation of beekeepers.

The magazine is a 48 page, A4 size, full colour magazine printed on recycled paper. It has been available online for a number of years and more recently we have ventured into the mobile market with each edition now available for viewing on iPads, iPhones, androids and most recently Kindle Fire. Access to the online and mobile versions are provided free with every hard copy subscription. But we are keen that you should be able to 'try before you buy' and so there are a few back copies on our website ([www.bee-craft.com](http://www.bee-craft.com)) that enable you to do just that.

The online and mobile versions if purchased on their own provide ease of access and reduced costs particularly for our growing number of international subscribers, when postage costs can be prohibitive. Our website team is developing a reference database of previous articles and information for the avid beekeeper, at all levels of experience. The site also provides a means of access to our online shop for books and gifts, as well as the link to join our monthly hangouts/webinars. These hangouts are free to watch live, through our website, but are also recorded for viewing later and we are pleased to offer the link to go onto any association website. Questions can be emailed beforehand or during the 'show' and we aim to answer them all on the night. The webinars are chaired by James, our Marketing Manager, with guests experienced in a given topic 'hanging out' with other members of the *Bee Craft* team.

Contributors to our magazine provide quality, reliable information on all beekeeping topics and each year Bee Craft sponsors a a full day of Research Lectures at the National Honey Show. We will also attend or provide sponsorship/support in some form to as many association events and courses as possible each year.

So, don't be shy – take a look at our website, our magazine, our special deals, our hangouts, our advertisers and take us up on our offers of support. If we can, we will.

We offer a discount for group subscriptions. For more details please contact our Administrator, Sue Jakeman at [secretary@bee-craft.com](mailto:secretary@bee-craft.com)

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All other Divisions:  
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