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THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

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Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex

No. 615

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March 2016

EBKA Divisional Meetings

Diary dates for March & April 2016

3 Mar	Thursday	Harlow	Bee Venom Allergy & Anaphylaxia - with Mike Morgan.
3 Mar	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	'Honey Extraction' Jim McNeill. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL
13 Mar	Sunday	Epping Forest	Bee Improvement Day with Roger Patterson.
16 Mar	Wednesday 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Tba - The Oak House, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
17 Mar	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	Swarm Management - Chingford Horticultural Hall
18 Mar	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	'Microscopy - practical session. Constitutional club, Braintree CM7 1TY
19 Mar	Saturday 2.00pm	County Event	Annual General Meeting - Writtle University Room E06. Chelmsford CM1 3RP NB. REVISED DATE
21 Mar	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Preparing for Spring' - Michael Badger MBE. The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
23 Mar	Wednesday 7.30pm	Southend	tba Rayleigh W I Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED
23 Mar	Wednesday	Saffron Walden	'Improve Your Beekeeping No 1' - The season's first hive inspection. 36 Walden Road, Swards End CB10 2LF
24 Mar	Thursday 7.30pm	Colchester	Open Forum - Langham Community Centre, Colchester
7 April	Thursday	Harlow	'Queen rearing, Mini nucs & Queen introduction' - Pat Allen (followed by Swarm Control).
7 April	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	Company Drinks - Susanna Wallis. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL
12 April	Tuesday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	'Microscopy - all about Nosema & Acarine' - Jane Ridler at Swards End Village Hall, CB10 2LG
17 April	Sunday 2.00pm	County Event	Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture - Coach House, Marks Hall, Coggeshall CO6 1TG
21 April	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	Barbara Dalby - Chingford Horticultural Hall
24 April	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	Apiary Meeting at Coney Green, Great Bardfield CM7 4PY
27 April	Wednesday 7.30pm	Southend	'Improving your skills and knowledge of beekeeping' - Jane Ridler Rayleigh W I Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED

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

Who's who and how to contact them

President of EBKA **Pat Allen** Hon CLM

Trustees:

Chairman: *Ian Nichols* 17 Dyers Hall Road, Leytonstone, London E11 4AD
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EBKA CEC Vacancies

As the CEC Chairman noted in his report for the 2016 AGM, the Association operates with a “can help” and “can do” attitude. With this in mind, the Central Executive Committee is now looking for members to join them to take on roles that have become vacant.

- **CEC Minutes Secretary**
- **EBKA Honey Show Secretary**

If you have the expertise and wish to join the CEC to undertake either of these positions, please contact Michael Webb, EBKA Secretary for further details at

gsecebka@virginmedia.com

There is also a vacancy for a member to coordinate and be responsible for the sale of promotional items of EBKA Enterprises.

Please contact Michael Webb on 0771 249 0511 if you are interested and can help.

Cover Photographs by Paul Abbott - Southend-on-Sea Division
Almond Blossom out, Honeybees foraging, Temperature 9.5°C,

February 2nd 2016!



**Centre for Ecology
and Hydrology**
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

CEH 10/03/13

Are neonicotinoid pesticides ending up in honey?

The problem: Neonicotinoid pesticides have been widely used as a seed treatment on mass flowering crops like oilseed rape. Traces of these pesticides can be found in the pollen and nectar on which bees feed, so there is a risk that they may end up in honey. Although there is currently an EU moratorium on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on oilseed rape, they are still widely used on cereal crops. However, recent evidence suggests that neonicotinoids can persist in soils and be picked up by wild flowers growing on the edge of arable crops, thus providing a further risk of exposure.

What we are trying to do: We want to analyse samples of locally produced honey to see whether any traces of neonicotinoid pesticides are present.

What we need: We are looking for small samples of honey that can be linked to a location (i.e. an Ordnance Survey grid reference of where the hives were placed) and collection date (e.g. month or at least year).

If you are interested in participating please e-mail Ben Woodcock at bawood@ceh.ac.uk.

We will send you a small sample tube for the honey, a short questionnaire and pre-paid return packaging. If you have more than one potential honey sample (i.e. you have hives in lots of locations) let us know and we will send you more tubes. We will treat all information as strictly confidential and no results will ever be linked to specific individuals. If you are interested in the results for your honey we will be happy to provide them. This project is run by Prof. Richard Pywell from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) which is the UK's Centre of Excellence for integrated research in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.

CONGRATULATIONS BEN

Ben Qureshi, 17, from Buckhurst Hill, Epping becomes the first person after many years to pass the Junior beekeeping examination in Essex, receiving 'extremely high marks'.

At the Annual General Meeting of Epping Forest Division, Ben was awarded his certificate by Divisional President Ken Barker.

After starting the hobby as part of his now completed Duke of Edinburgh Certificate Gold Award, Ben now tends a hive at home.

*Photograph courtesy of
Guardian Series*



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Regards, Honey Helpers

Notes from the Central Executive Committee (CEC)

Meeting on 28 January 2016

Items taken at the above meeting included:

BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) 9 January 2016

The BBKA Link Trustee, Howard Pool provided the Secretary with the main points taken at the meeting. A report of the meeting will appear in a future edition of the BBKA News.

Grant Requests

The CEC considered and approved the motion proposed by Saffron Walden that an annual bulk buy for all Divisions who wish to participate should replace the current grant request procedure where Divisions individually can put forward requests each half year. Divisions would be granted a 50% subsidy paid for by the CEC on all bulk buy purchases. This proposed change has already worked well in 2015 where a bulk purchase of microscopes will be used at the county wide Microscopy Course held at the end of February. It was agreed that the EBKA bulk purchase for 2016 would be "pop-up shelters" for use at divisional apiary days, workshops, shows and training days. Future bulk buys for Divisions will be agreed at the November CEC meeting each year.

Changes to the EBKA Rules

The recommended update and minor revisions to the Rules were agreed at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on Thursday 28 January 2016 at Trinity Methodist Church. The updated Rules are now on the EBKA Website and paper copies will be available for members at the 2016 EBKA AGM.

The 2016 EBKA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The agenda for the AGM was approved and Nigel Housden, Press and Public Relations at the BBKA is to give the keynote speech "Build the Buzz" - the bee listening project supported by the BBKA. All members are cordially invited to attend this event.

The Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture

Admission to this lecture must be purchased in advance and details can be found on the EBKA website.

Feedback on any matter discussed by CEC is welcomed and should be directed to your Divisional Trustee (contact details on inside back page).

When a Flower is not a Flower

Celia Davis - Warwickshire BKA via eBees

The plants that I am looking at this month are not all they seem. Many of them are very common species with which we have been familiar since childhood, and some are important producers of pollen and nectar. Many are regarded as weeds by farmers and gardeners and most are instantly recognisable as belonging to the same family. The family I am talking about is the Asteraceae. The old name for this group was the Compositae, a good name, because it describes the 'flowers' perfectly because they are composites of many much smaller flowers, each called a floret. Accurately they can be described as inflorescences, a term which merely means a collection of flowers with their branching stems (where relevant) and their bracts (little leaf-like structures).

We are all familiar with the concept of flowers being aggregated into inflorescences and have only to think of foxgloves and hedge parsley, but these do not concern us here. The inflorescence of the Asteraceae is a specialised one called a capitulum (found also in the Dipsaceae, Teasel family) where the individual florets are packed tightly together in a usually flat head, the whole surrounded by the bracts, which are small and green and often in more than one layer. Common examples are the daisy, dandelion, sunflower and dahlia. So far so good, but those observant ones among you will notice that the inflorescences of a daisy and dandelion do not look the same as one another. This is because there are two different kinds of florets, a small round one called a disc floret and an elongated one called a ray floret. (They have posher names but those will suffice.)

So the daisy and sunflower have both kinds, disc in the centre and ray round the outside, whereas a dandelion has only ray florets and Tansy has only disc florets. To add to the general complexity (or confusion?) some florets, or individual capita, may be single sex or may contain both sexes. This depends on the species. Obviously all female ones will contain no pollen at all. There are no hard and fast rules and it is a huge family.

Now to the Asteraceae and bees:

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is always considered a quite important bee plant as it flowers so early in the year and colonies can



Cultivated aster showing pollen-laden disc florets surrounded by purple ray florets.

really benefit from it. It may sometimes produce a crop, although this is unusual as it is so early, but the honey is quite strongly flavoured and not to everyone's taste. The pollen, a deep golden yellow, but often appearing orange in pollen loads, is produced in huge amounts but is not a perfect food for honey bees as it is low in the levels of some essential amino acids. It is quite oily and can impart a yellow colour to the wax. It is a very pretty pollen when seen under the microscope. It is also much loved by students studying pollen because of its distinctive structure. However, it is quite similar to some other species in the family so care must be exercised.



Section through the capitulum of a dandelion, showing insertion of individual florets.

Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) is grown as a crop in many countries but not on any scale here, as our summers are not sufficiently long and hot. A few years ago quite a number of fields appeared in our area as trials but they were not repeated. Commercially it is grown for seed, from which oil is obtained. It is frequently grown in gardens where it is avidly worked by honey bees but, again, the pollen is somewhat less than perfect in composition.

Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) is regarded as a noxious weed. It contains chemicals known as pyrrolizidine alkaloids which cause liver damage, particularly in horses. They rarely eat fresh ragwort but are unable to detect it in hay, where it poses a particular danger. The effects are cumulative and very serious. Ragwort seems to have proliferated in recent years particularly on grass verges and traffic islands, with no-one making much effort to reduce its spread. When bees are working ragwort, the wax becomes deep yellow and the honey, which is a golden yellow colour, has a very strong, rather unpleasant aroma and taste. It improves on keeping and after granulation. The alkaloids were found to present no problem to human consumers.

Many other species, both wild and cultivated, occur but space precludes mention of any more.

Any good flower book will help. Probably the best is '*Wild Flowers*' by Blaney, Fitter and Fitter (Second ed. 2013) which is up-to-date and has excellent pictures.

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held at 6.30pm on Thursday 28th January 2016 at Trinity Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2XB

These minutes will be considered correct if no objection is raised in writing or by email before Saturday 19th March 2016. Any point challenged will be brought before the 2016 EBKA AGM for correction of the record.

Presiding Officer elect: Jim McNeill Chairman, Romford Division
Also present: 8 people signed the Attendance Book.

Notice having been given in accordance with the Rules of the EBKA, the meeting had been called to approve the update and minor revision of the Rules of the EBKA.

- 1 The change "**within the meaning of section 177 of the Charities Act 2011**" replacing "section 97 of the Charities Act 1997 to **paragraph 2 in Rule 7** when referring to Charity Trustees was proposed by Ian Nichols, seconded by Marguerita Wilson and approved unanimously.
- 2 The change in the listing of appointees of **County Appointees in Rule 7** to include the **Education Secretary** was proposed by Ian Nichols, seconded by Stuart Mitson and approved unanimously.
- 3 The change in the listing of appointees of **CEC Appointees in Rule 7** to include the **Webmaster** was proposed by Bob Manning, seconded by Ian Nichols and approved unanimously.
- 4 Following a discussion it was agreed that the proposal to remove **Rule 20g** should be rejected and amended with the following wording, "**Submit a list to the General Treasurer by 30th November every year of sums received which qualified for Gift Aid during the current subscription year**". The revision to the Rule was proposed by Pat Allen, seconded by Bob Manning and carried unanimously.

The Secretary reported that the agreed changes to the Rules dated January 2016 would be made with a copy being sent to the Charity Commissioners and the BBKA. The revised Rules would appear on the EBKA Website with paper copies being made available for members at the 2016 EBKA AGM.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7pm.

Report by the Chair of the CEC to the EBKA 2016 Annual General Meeting

Ian Nichols

Divisions have reported a steady amount of new and would be beekeepers attending meetings and courses. We welcome them into our community. A few members have been successful in the General Husbandry and the Advanced Husbandry exams with Jane Ridler now becoming a Master Beekeeper. Well done to all.

The **EBKA conference** was run by Dengie Hundred & Maldon Division (DMBKA). The conference provided a good day out with provocative and colourful speakers, tasty food, presentations of cups from the honey show and BBKA examination certificates together with a quality raffle in aid of 'Bees Abroad'. It was a day full of learning and fun. Sadly, once again, this event only attracted familiar folk and a small percentage of our new membership, even though Carlie Mayes and the DMBKA Team did all they could to promote this outstanding annual event which is run by successive Divisions in rotation each year. Romford pick up the baton for 2016. Please do your utmost to support them.

The **Essex Honey Show** saw more high quality entries with mixed weather and great interest from the good folk of Essex. The EBKA tent and demonstrations were well attended and have been remembered by everyone who visited, even the beekeepers who won a cup or two. We must thank all those who graciously volunteered their time and energy - especially Richard Ridler (Show Secretary), who has stepped down after completing another successful year and Pat Allen, for her stocks of bees, which provided the public with great interest. Entries for the **National Honey Show** in October at Weybridge showed a large increase with richly deserved success for those who took part. It was nice to see faces from the Essex membership participating in lectures and taking prizes.

The **CEC**, made up from members of the nine Divisions in Essex, have steered the Association through another year. I would like to thank the other County Officers, the Divisional Voting Members, and the County and CEC Appointed Members for the resounding success and the many challenges met. The main change to the composition of the CEC during the year was the introduction of an Education Secretary by taking on some of the duties previously performed by the Examinations Secretary.

All Divisions have shown interesting and varied activities over the year, including training, lectures, demonstrations and workshops, which take a great deal of effort and good humour to organise and implement by willing volunteers. It is this 'can help' and 'can do' attitude that binds our Association together.

[A copy of this report has been sent to the Charity Commissioners on behalf of the Trustees of the EBKA as legally required]

With a dank and bitter cold start to the year, things did not bode well for Beekeeping's Spring Build Up. Even the summer had moments of high winds, rain and vast temperature swings; leaving us to wonder what the weather was up to next. Climate change has been knocking at the bees' and the local habitat's doors for some time. The results by the end of the season showed poor queens lost, not mated and some beekeepers with a honey crop down on the year before. Again those who relied on the oilseed rape crop have had only a small success.

Our **membership** is still strong with plenty joining and hopefully taking hold of the reins in the years to come. We have sadly lost valuable members of our community, notably Geoff Mills and Eileen Marrable, who had knowledge and experience that is hard to glean from books. Both volunteered readily.

Our **finances** remain in good health, which has resulted from prudent management of our resources and from increased membership. Collectively, this has been put to good use for all with training courses and resources for Divisions. It has also enabled us to absorb an increased capitation fee from the BBKA by one pound per member which will, for a second year running, restrict having to raise fees in 2016. However, it may be that we will not be able to continue to contain future increases in BBKA capitation fees.

We have a new **Link Trustee** from the BBKA, Howard Pool, who we have already invited to two Central Executive Committee (CEC) meetings to discuss the changes at the BBKA, as well as inform us of what the BBKA is doing for their membership.

This is the first full year of the **EU ban on Neonicotinoid pesticides** on flowering crops. The oilseed rape crop in some areas suffered from the flea beetle. We should be aware that, as a result, an emergency spraying of neonicotinoid pesticides may come into use in 2016. With political and economic arguments of a £12 billion global industry, it would not surprise me to learn that the concerns of the Essex beekeepers are quite far down their list.

Our **education programme** continues to make progress with members taking exams. We ran countywide Module workshops as well as General Husbandry workshops. We would like to see more members take advantage of these EBKA funded opportunities. Bee Health Day again was a great a success.

Essex Beekeepers' Association
136th Annual General Meeting

to be held on

Saturday 19 March 2016 at 2pm in
Room E06, Writtle College, Lordship Lane,
Chelmsford **CM1 3RP**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 135th AGM.
3. Minutes of the EGM on 28 January 2016.
4. Report of the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee (CEC).
5. General Treasurer's Report and Approval of the 2015 Accounts.
6. Written Reports of other members of the CEC.
7. Election of County Officers (Trustees) -
Chairman of the CEC,
General Treasurer and General Secretary
8. Notification of the 2016 Divisional Voting Members and 2017 Presiding Officer.

9. Election of County (non Trustee) Appointees -
President
BBKA Delegate
Editor (*The Essex Beekeeper*)
Education Secretary
Examinations Secretary
NHS Delegate
EBKA Show Secretary
Spray & Disease Committee Delegate
10. Notification of CEC Appointees and Co-opted Members.
11. Confirmation of the Accounts Examiner -
(External Auditor).
12. 2015 Conference Report.
13. 2016 Conference Preview.
14. Installation of the 2016 Presiding Officer.
15. Reading from the Book of Commemoration.

Following the AGM

Members of the Romford Division will provide refreshments

The AGM Keynote Speech - "Build the Buzz"
will be given by Nigel Housden, Press & Media Relations,
BBKA.

"Build the Buzz" – the Bee Listening Project is a new ground-breaking national scientific venture utilising highly sensitive technological equipment to gather data from within the beehive.

Supported by the BBKA