

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Seasonal Bee Inspector Peter Heath retirement - Dr Mike Brown (Head of National Bee Unit) presents a farewell gift.

Photograph by Jean Smye

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

*Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex
Registered Charity number 1031419*

www.ebka.org

Issue No. 635

November 2017

Divisional Meetings - dates for November & December 2017

2 Nov	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	Tba & Winter Programme discussions. Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
2 Nov	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	'Bees & Farming' - Talk by Richard Martin. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
13 Nov	Monday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	'A City Livery Company and Beekeepers' - talk by Arthur Davey, Master of the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers. Thaxted Day Centre, Vicarage Lane CM6 2RL
15 Nov	Wed 7.0pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	'What do we do?' - Alan Hart, Bee Farmers' Assoc. The Oakhouse, High St, Maldon CM9 5PR
16 Nov	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	tba
18 Nov	Saturday 9.00am	Saffron Walden	'Bee Improvement for All' - Swards End Village Hall, CB10 2LG - Tickets: swbka.info@gmail.com
20 Nov	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	Chelmsford Environmental Strategy - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
22 Nov	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	AGM & Beekeeping Websites - WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh, SS6 7ED
23 Nov	Thursday 7.30pm	Colchester	'Microscopy' - Langham Community Centre, School Rd CO4 5PA
24 Nov	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	'Eat Natural' - Their products and beekeeping campaign. White Notley Village Hall, The Street, White Notley CM8 1RH
7 Dec	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	Christmas Social - Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
7 Dec	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	Christmas Party & Bee Quiz - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
10 Dec	Sunday	Southend	'Informal Christmas Social' - The Roebuck PH, Rayleigh
11 Dec	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Lets decorate our honey' - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2 XB
13 Dec	Wednesday 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	'Wasps - misunderstood?' Dan (Killer Instinct). The Oakhouse, High street, Maldon CM9 5PR
14 Dec	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	AGM (part) and Christmas Social. Chingford Horticultural Hall.
15 Dec	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	Christmas Social - White Notley Village Hall, CM8 1RH

WANTED

EBKA General Secretary

The term of office of the current General Secretary concludes at the end of the EBKA 2018 AGM to be held on Saturday 24 March.

This role is essential in organising meetings of the Central Executive Committee (CEC), dealing with all Association correspondence, arranging the Annual General Meeting and undertaking other duties of a secretary of an organisation.

Ian Nichols, the chair of the CEC would like to hear from any member who wishes to be considered for this role. Please email Ian at:

ian.nichols@iannichols.demon.co.uk
with your details to register your interest.

Please contact Michael Webb, the current General Secretary at: **gsecebka@virginmedia.com** if you would like further details of the role and the nature of the duties of this position.

Closing date: end of December, interviews to be held in the New Year.

Did You Know?

The Essex Beekeeper is available online at ebka.org approximately a week before the end of the previous month.

Members of EBKA can advertise in this publication FREE OF CHARGE for equipment/goods, etc for sale or wanted on a non-commercial basis.

Send details and contact details to Editor at: jsmye@sky.com by the 4th of the previous month

Saffron Walden BKA

with **BIBBA**

Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association

Bee Improvement for All

with **Roger Patterson**

Saturday 18 November 2017

9 am to 4.30 pm

Cost: £ 12.50 to include tea/coffee

Limited availability, please enquire before booking

'Bee Improvement For All' is a one day course that is designed to help beekeepers use opportunities to improve their bees, as well as giving information to those who wish to raise more queens. Some speakers and books don't serve the beekeeper with a few colonies very well, as they often use methods that are beyond the needs of the ordinary beekeeper. This course will help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees, using simple techniques without the need for specialist equipment.

There will be plenty of information on colony management, with emphasis on understanding what is happening inside colonies and keeping things simple. This course will help beekeepers to rear their own queens from good local stock that are survivors, rather than using imported queens that may introduce pests and diseases and may not suit our unpredictable climate.

Please bring your own lunch.

To check availability -

Swbka.info@gmail.com

**Sewards End
Village Hall,
Sewards End,
Saffron Walden
CB10 2LG**



130th ANNUAL HONEY SHOW

Show Secretary's Report - Pauline Tidmas



This year saw a change of venue from Barleylands to the Orsett Show at Thurrock and it went extremely well.

This was a 1 day event compared to 2 days previously. We had a large marquee set along the side and towards one of the corners of the showground. There was plenty of room for a gazebo and the Bee Demonstration pen to go alongside.

We received over 300 exhibits on the day which proved to be a good display within and outside the marquee. We introduced two new classes to celebrate our 130th annual show - polish and stitch work. Unfortunately, we received very few Junior class exhibits this year - we need to look at how we can encourage better interest for next year.

Money was spent on the refurbishment of the bee demonstration clock, which was in a poor state of repair. As you know we also devised and printed a new tri-fold leaflet with information about the Essex Beekeepers Association together with details of local Divisions.

Even though this was only a 1 day event, we had only just enough volunteers for the day. Sadly, some Divisions did not put forward any volunteers at all.

Due to the travelling distance for Colchester Division, who had responsibility for catering, they were concerned with transporting food over that distance on health grounds. We agreed to arrange for food to be collected from Cosco - Lakeside, and this worked very well.

Setting up the show at the showground was helped by well organised, accommodating and helpful showground management. They were extremely happy with the marquee and display and are encouraging us to return next year as this was a very successful day.

The show committee consists of EBKA members who work hard to present your show. It would be great if we had a member from each division of EBKA - how about it?

EBKA Governance

Information from the CEC Working Party

As you may know, Essex Beekeepers' Association is a registered charity, not an ordinary club or society and we have been looking at our governance for some months. Very helpfully, a new charities governance code was published in July of this year with a version specifically for small charities like ours. In our case our charitable purpose is ***to promote and further the craft of beekeeping.***

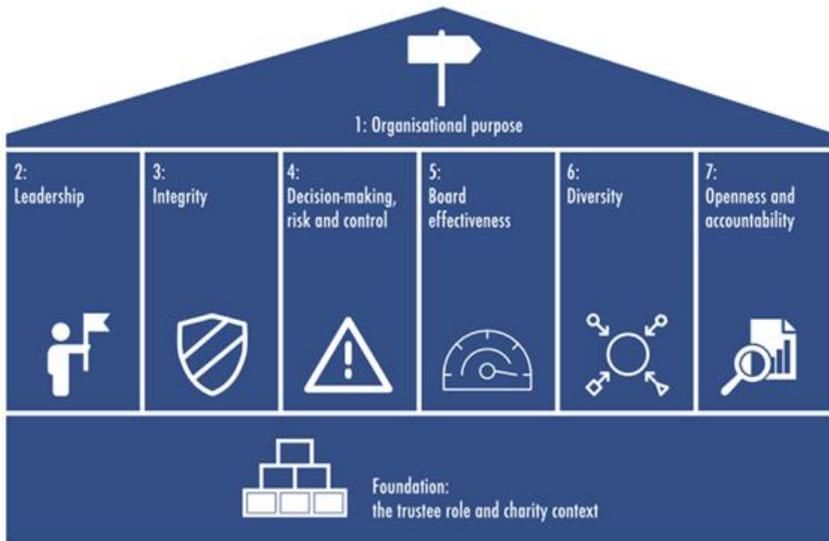
EBKA is itself an Area Association Member of the BBKA which is also a registered charity with the objects ***of promoting and furthering the craft of beekeeping and to advancing the education of the public in the importance of bees in the environment.***

The CEC has established a working party who are looking at all aspects of our governance including how we can ensure that EBKA meets the new code. Everything in the new code is about putting in place the processes and behaviours that mean charities like ours will be better able to deliver their purposes.

The code starts from the principle that trustees understand their role and are interested in helping their organisations develop further. The code contains some stretching objectives, but we believe they are all achievable for EBKA. There is an increased expectation in relation to aspects of board composition (in our case the CEC), dynamics and behaviours with explicit good practice recommendations about board size, frequency of board performance reviews, and trustees' terms of office. For example, there is a new emphasis on the chair's role in promoting good governance. If you are interested you can find the code at: www.charitygovernancecode.org/en

So, what can you do to help and what changes might we see? First the good news is that we believe we are already well governed and we have a written constitution. We will in future need Trustees who are trained in the needs of our Charity and we aim to provide both existing and all new Trustees with training next year, before they take on their roles after the AGM.

It would help greatly if Divisions chose their Trustees in the full knowledge that they will need to be committed to EBKA's cause and have joined the Central Executive Committee because they want to help EBKA deliver its purposes effectively for public benefit, recognising that meeting our stated public benefit is an ongoing requirement.



The Seven Principles that determine how a charity is meeting its legal and regulatory responsibilities

They will also need to understand their roles and legal responsibilities, and, in particular, have read and understood the Charity Commission’s guidance *The Essential Trustee* and our governing document ‘*The EBKA Rules*’. They will also need to be committed to good governance and want to contribute to our continued improvement.

EBKA is an unincorporated association and is therefore not a "legal entity" in law. This means it has no legal rights and is not separate from its members. It follows that individual members are legally responsible for the acts and omissions of the entire organisation. As EBKA acts through individuals or committees or divisions then in most cases, those individuals are responsible to the person they deal with, for what they do in the name of EBKA.

This is another aspect of our governance that we need to look at. We could for example consider becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is what the BBKA are doing. A CIO is a new form of legal entity designed especially for not for profit organisations such as ours. The main intended benefits of the new entity are that it has legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name, and limited liability so that its members and trustees will not have to contribute in the event of financial loss.

There is a lot to do. We will be preparing a new Trustees Handbook in time for new trustees in 2018 and ensuring that any changes we do need to make have the support of the CEC and the Divisions.



Letter from Margaret Wilson - BBKA Vice Chair

September 2017

Dear Members,

We have discussed several items at the Trustees meeting and we would like to bring you up to date with these suggestions or progress on existing projects.

Last year there were 590 Beekeepers who applied to take the **Basic Assessment** training and of those 518 actually took the assessment and the pass rate was 97%, of those 502 beekeepers there were 348 who passed with credits.

43 members applied to take the **General Husbandry** assessment, 10 withdrew, so 33 took the test. 21 passed, which is 64% and is an improvement on the past few years.

Advanced Husbandry had 36 candidates applied, with 32 taking the test, 18 passed which is 56% and is also better than previously.

Defra have sponsored the Husbandry again this year, so watch for the sessions in your area and take advantage of the sponsorship, it is well worth while.

The Trustees have also reinstated the Technical and Environment Committee, it will be joined with Research and will be called Research Technical and Environmental Committee. It will be headed by Pam Hunter and already three scientists have been recruited to advise where we would be best placed to make a real impact on Bee Research. More information in the months to come.

We are installing two new exams and they are being trailed now, one is on **Bee Health** and sits between the Basic and the General Husbandry, the other is on **Bee Breeding**, not to be confused with Queen rearing. This is to improve the quality of Bees in our own apiaries.

We would like to eventually have Bee Breeders situated around the country to help maintain good bees, if you are interested in the trials please contact Val Francis or Pam Hunter.

Now to the **Spring Convention**, this will be different as the Committee headed by Joyce Nesbit is looking to get behind what you want and to provide that in 2018. We are going to try to colour code the events - new beekeepers, those with a few years' experience and those who are very experienced. We want to encourage new beekeepers to attend lectures and workshops aimed at their level of beekeeping, to help them to improve their skills, they can of course attend any workshop and lecture but we are trying to encourage new beekeepers to come along and enjoy the experience of the Spring Convention. We also want to stretch those who have experience so we are looking to get the mix just right, if you have any suggestions please contact Joyce Nesbit yourself, she will be pleased to hear from you.

After another successful show (*Countryfile Live*) the Shows Committee met to discuss the possibilities for helping the Area Associations to promote beekeeping at Major regional shows. Suggestions are invited as to how the Shows Committee could help you. It was agreed that the Shows Committee work again with the local associations to promote beekeeping and pollinators in general at RHS Chatsworth and Countryfile in 2018

The **IMYB** project was a huge success and those volunteers who were there over the weekend gave the contestants something to remember, it was voted one of the best of its kind so many thanks to Ruth and Ian Homer for organising this great event. **Countryfile** on the TV also included interviews with the English contingent and an overview of the whole event, let's hope that this brings some interest from youngsters who up to now have never considered bees or beekeeping.

You may know that **National Bee Supplies** stopped trading earlier this year, the company has been taken over and the new owners 'Suttons Seeds' are keen to work with us to promote beekeeping, we are in the initial stages but things look promising.

We have obtained quotations for next year's insurance and have managed to get a further reduction of £2,500.00 not a lot, but it all helps.

The **All Risks Insurance**, is work in progress, we had an original quotation for £75K which would have meant £3.00 each if everyone took the insurance out. This was not practical or affordable to those members who may have wanted to take this insurance up, So we had to search elsewhere. We have managed to get a proposal to supply this insurance, but it is in its infancy and the finer details are being worked out. The Insurers seem willing to allow three years for take up, this is what controls the price. I have to thank those negotiating this as that is such a good concession. As soon as we have more information we will let you know.

The Swarm Video. All the shooting necessary to provide the video material is now "in the can" as they say. Launch date will be the ADM - this is one of the 3 videos originally sponsored by Rowse.

Bees in the Curriculum: Almost complete - style and content agreed and a launch date set for the National Honey Show. This is the teachers' pack to enable them to incorporate the honey bee and other pollinator education in primary schools across the country.

School Visitors Pack: This has been developed by Sue Webster and is currently being trialled. Launch date Spring Convention. This package is for the lay school visitor, a beekeeper, to deliver talks and activities in primary schools. Hopefully, this introduction will also inspire the teachers to take up and use the *Bees in the Curriculum* pack. Training will be available for beekeepers who want to participate. Training will be made available from May onwards.

Healthy Hive Guide: The update of this booklet is still on schedule for delivery at the spring convention.

More candidates are sought for trustees with an interest in education and training to serve on the E&H committee. Get you nominations in to the BBKA office please.

Our finances are looking good again, we have watched everything to get best value for money, some of this is due to the fact that Research has not used their budget this year, Pam Hunter who is the lead has had surgery which has immobilised her for a while, but she is back in harness now and is pursuing new ventures in research. By the time you read this letter you will probably have received the budgets for next year and we seem to be on track to have a small surplus this year, (fingers crossed)

The Web page design is now approved, we just have to get the script correct, it looks very good, but we want it to do so much more than previously, it also has to be user friendly, so there is a way to go yet.

The new Data Base system is looking to be on target for January next year that will be such an improvement for the associations and for the office staff as well.

We are looking at installing a stock control system - we hold stock for *Adopt a beehive* as with doing this in house it saves a considerable amount of money and the previous 'packers' made quite a lot of mistakes. We also have all the new booklets, they are sold through the shop and also taken to shows by Trustees and the Shows Committee. We want to be in a situation where we have a base stock level for reordering so that if anything needs updating we have the time to do this. We also need to know that the

stock issued is accounted for, this year it has made a difference to the costing for the *BBKA News* as it comes under that umbrella. Sharon Blake, who is the editor of the *BBKA News*, has worked wonders this year, producing four books up to now with more in the making. She has also managed to reduce the print costs by £5,000.00 for the *BBKA News*. Sally Carter gets in the advertising for the magazine and despite the books being 'extras' she has managed to get our regular advertisers to dip their hands in their pockets and support each book, a fantastic job by anyone's standards, this keeps the price down for our members.

We have recruited a new member of staff to help with fundraising - Clare Hartry has joined the team. She has a Master's Degree in Journalism and has worked with the Association of Applied Biologists on their Journal *Food and Energy Security*. Clare has all the right attributes to help in the quest for funds.

We will have **six vacancies for Trustees** in January. If you want to see how the BBKA is managed and would want to help influence its future, please apply to be a Trustee by asking your Association to sponsor you with another Association to second you. You need a passion for bees and to be a team player. It can be a challenging role but it has a lot of job satisfaction which goes with it. We work with likeminded people, after all we all look after bees. The skills are used within Education, HR, IT, Finance, Shows, Fund Raising, Research and Governance, then we combine all those at the Executive Committee meeting, discussing the best way forward for each section and ultimately for our members. If you have experience in any of these areas please consider this opportunity.

Honey Buckets

for sale

£2 each

Contact: David Tyler

Tel: **01279 730 228**



The Differences between Winter and Summer Bees

From an article courtesy of Celia Davis, Warwickshire BKA via ebees

In the late Summer and Autumn the queen continues to lay, although at a reduced rate. The bees that develop from these eggs will have a lower metabolic rate and little work to do as there are fewer larvae to feed and the available forage is meagre. As a result of this they remain physiologically 'young' and do not follow the normal pattern of development and aging which we see throughout the Summer; when at approximately 3 week old the bees graduate from in-hive duties to foraging and, as a result, age and die in about 2–3 weeks. The aging process in a bee switches when that bee becomes a forager.

At that point in its life, a number of changes take place: its protein levels drop, its Juvenile Hormone (JH) levels rise and it is then on the slippery slope to death. Our winter bees however, do not make this transition at 3 weeks, but continue in their physiologically young state until the Spring, when they kick-start the massive colony growth which precedes the swarming season. So, how do they prepare for this lifestyle? All newly-hatched workers eat nectar / honey and large quantities of bee bread, which is stored, fermented pollen. The honey provides the carbohydrate in the diet but the pollen contains large amounts of protein plus some fat, minerals and vitamins, and is used by the summer bees to manufacture brood food in the mandibular and hypopharyngeal glands of these young bees so that they can feed larvae. Young winter bees also consume large quantities of bee bread but they do not use it immediately. Instead, much of it is stored in their fat bodies as substances including enzymes and other proteins. Two characteristics that differentiate the winter bees are their level of fat body and their amount of egg yolk precursor vitellogenin (vg). Fat bodies are spread throughout the body of the bee, principally in the roof and the floor of the abdomen, where they appear as masses of white cells. The bees from colonies that survive the Winter most successfully have higher levels of vg and also interestingly but perhaps not surprisingly lower levels of varroa. Well fed, winter bees have abundant fat bodies.

One of their principal stored proteins is vitellogenin (vg), and quantities of this are also stored in the hypopharyngeal glands, which remain plump. In the Spring, as new larvae need food, all this stored protein is converted into brood food. With their protein reserves depleted, our winter bees become foragers, the aging process starts for them and they die.

So the differences between winter and summer bees include - body fatness, protein amounts and types of hormone levels, which control their life span and enable them to fulfil their different roles in the life cycle of the colony.



Peter Heath
(Seasonal Bee Inspector) retirement celebration



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Agent for E H Thorne and Northern Bee Books

BBKA MODULE STUDY GROUPS & MODULE 2 TRAINING DAY - 2017-18



If you are interested in joining the Module Study Groups or Module 2 Training Day please email me:

jane.ridler@uwclub.net EBKA Education Secretary.

The Study Groups will be held in October/November, evenings tbc, in Great Dunmow, and will cover **Module 1** (Honey Bee Management) and **Module 5** (Honey Bee Biology) in preparation for 11th November exams.

The Module 2 Training Day (Honey Bee Products & Forage) will take place at Writtle University on Sunday 21st January 2018.

Knowledge and experience up to the Basic Assessment will be assumed but only required if you are actually sitting the exams.

More details later, depending on response.

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