

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Romford Division's winning entry in the Divisional Garden Class - Essex Honey Show 2014

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

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Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex*

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www.essexbeekeepers.com

**October
2014**

Divisional Meetings

October & November 2014

2 Oct	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	2015 Divisional Programme
3 Oct	Friday 8.00pm	Romford	'History of Havering' - Cllr Andrew Curtin
8 Oct	Wednesday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	'Propolis - the Magic Medicine' - Talk by Richard Ridler. Thaxted Guildhall CM6 2LA
11 Oct	Saturday	County Event	EBKA Annual Conference — Runnymede Hall, Kiln Road, Thundersley, Benfleet SS7 1TF
15 Oct	Wednesday 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Members meeting - The Norton PH, Cold Norton CM3 6JE
16 Oct	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	'Planting for Pollinators' - Mark Patterson Chingford Horticultural Hall
18 Oct	Saturday 2.30pm	Romford	Honey Show - Judging at 2.30pm Ascension Church Annual Supper - 5.30pm
18 Oct	Saturday 10.30am	Saffron Walden	Carpentry Workshop - Make, assemble or mend at Pickford's Workshop, Great Easton. Please contact Sally Freeman 01371 873 134.
20 Oct	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'More than Honey' - Friends of the Earth film. The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
23 Oct	Thursday 7.30pm	Colchester	Beekeepers Meeting - Langham Community Centre, School Road, Colchester CO4 5PA
31 Oct	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	'Wildlife' - Barry Kaufmann-Wright Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY
6 Nov	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	'Mead Making' - Mike Barke Finalising Divisional Programme for 2015
7 Nov	Friday 8.00pm	Romford	'Products from the Hive' - Speaker tba Chadwick Hall, Main Road, RM2 5EL
17 Nov	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Beekeeping in London' - David Lockie, The Link, Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
19 Nov	Wednesday 7.00pm	Saffron Walden	'Beating Varroa' - 6 members share their methods. The Crown, Little Walden CB10 1XA.
19 Nov	Wednesday 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Members meeting. The Norton PH, Cold Norton CM3 6JE
28 Nov	Friday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	Annual Beekeepers' Supper, Millennium Hall, Great Baddow, Chelmsford

83rd National Honey Show 2014

As you already know, an enthusiastic team works hard all year round to plan and bring you a bigger and better National Honey Show each year. As usual, for 2014 we will have lectures by world class scientific researchers in the bee world. The programme includes Dr Jamie Ellis University of Florida on the subjects of Research there, Honey Bee Biology, and their diseases and pathogens; Ann Harman, Vermont, US will talk on the topics of sugars and reducing stress on bees, and Pollination; Giles Budge on the work of the NBU; Prof Nikolaus Koeniger on honeybee diversity, and preventing re-infestation of varroa and Gudrun Koeniger on mating strategies to avoid inbreeding. Professor Stephen Martin will talk about life cycles of wasps and hornets, and Michael Badger MBE on maximising honey production in the urban environment.

The Friday BeeCraft Lectures programme includes 'whether bees like the taste of honey' by Nicola Simcock from the Institute of Neuroscience, University of Newcastle and Africanised bees by Ann Harman, Vermont, US.

Saturday lectures for those new to beekeeping, and/or just interested in the subjects will include Yearly Beekeeping Activities, and Products of the Hive for Showing.

On the subject of showing, we have two new classes this year: Class 6 for 2 jars of set honey; and Class 41 one bottle of sweet and one bottle of dry mead .

As last year, there will be lectures at 9.30am and 11am on the Thursday morning. The trade hall will open earlier, at 12 noon on Thursday. The main show opening ceremony is at 2pm, followed by exhibition of classes which opens after the judging has finished.

We want to encourage more competitive entries, and give our old hands a run for the prizes. Many of our experts are happy to both talk to newcomers at the show , and share their 'secrets' in the 'how to'

*Photographs of Essex Honey Show on cover and pages 8/9 by Paul Abbott and Jean Smye
The views expressed in any article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent*

workshops. We appreciate that many people are interested in how the judges arrive at their decisions. Judges have followed a long path of showing themselves, stewarding, and study to become judges and many are happy to share their knowledge and expertise. Two of the Gift Classes: Class 5: Two jars of liquid honey and Class 6: Two jars of set honey will have judges' feedback for every entry. Many of the judges stay at the show and would be happy to answer interested enquiries about the classes they have judged.

We have a unique collection of displays, lectures and networking opportunities at the National Honey Show, and look forward to seeing you at the Show this autumn: **Thursday 30th October to Saturday 1st November 2014** once more at St Georges College, Weybridge **KT15 2QS**

*** See page 6 for further news for Essex Beekeepers**

Himalayan Balsam - a threat or an asset?

A leaflet published by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland appeals for help in eliminating Himalayan Balsam, pointing out that ...“it obliterates other natural growing wild plants, and reduces the amount they are pollinated. On river banks it can kill off the vegetation growing there and then, when it dies back in the autumn, exposes the river bank, leading to erosion.”

The leaflet does however provide a nice balance by going on to say ...”There is a beekeeping lobby which feels that Himalayan balsam should be allowed to continue to grow ... as it is much visited by both bumble and honey bees. From a biodiversity and conservation point of view a balance has to be struck between helping sustain insect populations with balsam and other species and the obliteration of native plant communities by large stands of Himalayan balsam. While it is illegal to actively distribute Balsam seeds, it does not preclude the option for beekeepers to have some Balsam in their gardens, providing it does not spread outside their boundaries.”

From Reigate BeeNews via *ebees*

The Importance of Ivy to Bees

To some it is considered a nuisance because it damages buildings, overwhelms flower beds and strangles trees, but there may be a really important reason for gardeners to value ivy.

It is one of the most important sources of food for honey bees, scientists at the University of Sussex have discovered. Ivy provides most of the pollen and nectar they collect during the autumn months, when colonies are trying to build up stores of honey for the winter.

Professor Francis Ratnieks and Mihail Garbuzov from Sussex's Laboratory of Apiculture, studied the waggle dance and the pollen being brought back to the hive. They found that bees travelled

less distance to collect food in the autumn than during the summer when they forage in fields and on wild flowers. They also discovered that 89% of pollen on the bees was from ivy and that 80% of the bees were collecting nectar from ivy when it was in flower. Professor Ratnieks said "Bees, butterflies and other flying insects visit the flowers for food in huge numbers. It is unusual to see a single plant that plays such an important role over the two months that it flowers." He urged gardeners not to rip ivy out when tidying.

From Professor Ratniek's talk at the Spring Convention.

Reported by West Cornwall Beekeepers via ebees

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More about the National Honey Show

Jim McNeill - NHS Delegate

Essex Honey is some of the finest honey you can get, so why not enter some at the biggest honey show in this country. Get your entry forms in by the 8th October, there are 252 classes plus Essex has a section of it's own. If you can't get to Weybridge I can take your entries for you and bring them back (*with your prize cards & winnings!*), so do have a go.

You need to get your exhibits to me by

Tuesday 28th October at Collier Row

- just give me a ring on **01708 765 898**.

Jim McNeill NHS Delegate



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Discounted Honey Jars

Jean Smye

The delivery of the annual jar order went smoothly (well, when I say smoothly, I mean smoothish!) and all the orders have been collected/distributed. Many thanks to the willing helpers who carried, sorted, counted, labelled, counted again — Rachel Floater, Pauline and David Tidmas, John Barlow, Mike Keepence and Mike Barke - it really is a big order and they all worked very hard.

The total value of our order for the honey jars was in the region of £19,000. Bought by individuals, the cost of the various quantities and sizes of jars would be in excess of £32,000, so it really does make sense to order as a county group.

The order next year will be the end of July.

STOP PRESS:

On September 11 2014, the Italian National Reference Centre for beekeeping confirmed the first detection of the presence of Small hive beetle (SHB) in South West Italy, in the port city of Gioia Tauro. The samples were taken from a bait trap (similar to the Sentinel Apiaries in the UK) belonging to the University of Gioia Tauro.

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Preparing Creamed or Soft Set Honey

Creamed or Soft Set honey is the ideal way to market a honey that is otherwise likely to start granulating in the jar (e.g. oilseed rape honey).

Stage 1: Honey for creaming may be crystallising or have already set. In either case, it will need to be made completely liquid again. To do this it is heated for half an hour at 60°C in a double boiler and stirred frequently to ensure that no crystals are present and also to minimise the time taken to reach the required temperature. The honey is then poured through a fine filter cloth. A proprietary filter cloth can be used but two thicknesses of fine un-patterned nylon net curtain also suffice. It is important to filter the honey finely as any foreign bodies or specks will show up very strongly against the light-coloured honey. The liquid honey is then cooled as rapidly as possible to 15°C. Any melted wax and fine bubbles of trapped air form a white scum on the surface of the honey which can be gathered using a flat ended spatula and removed with a shallow spoon. Leave the honey for 24 — 48 hours before skimming.

Stage 2: A finely granulated seed honey now needs to be added to start the creaming process. Typically, softened oilseed rape honey will be used, which needs forcing through a fine metal sieve using the back of a spoon. This is hard work the first time, as you need to add between 5% and 10% of seed honey to your main batch, but this needs doing only once as sufficient honey from each creamed batch can be used to seed the next. This seed honey is then stirred into the main batch using a powerful slow-turning electric drill with an agitator fitted (several versions are on the market).

The honey is kept at about 15°C (the ideal is 14°C) and stirred two or three times a day, keeping the stirrer well down to try to avoid entrapping any more air. Neither should it be stirred for too long as this could raise the temperature of the honey. Stir thoroughly for a couple of minutes, especially near the bottom, as any larger crystals will sink. The point of the stirring is to break up any crystals of

glucose to make them as small as possible. Although the thermostat on your warming cabinet may be calibrated, a thermometer should be used to make sure that the temperature is correct. The honey will stiffen and become paler due to the increasing number of fine glucose crystals, the speed at which it does so depending on the base honey used. Stiffening is the best indicator that setting is under way. When this happens the honey needs to be packed in jars without delay, although if it does set in the tub you can always reverse the process sufficiently with a warming cabinet by slightly increasing the temperature.

If you want to try for first prizes in creamed honey show classes, I would suggest using a strongly flavoured honey. A bland honey can also be improved by blending with a small quantity of a strongly flavoured honey such as heather. The outcome that you are striving for is something like the consistency of butter. With that in mind, you have to remember that the first batch that you make contains up to 10% of the seed honey, which you will feel on your tongue. However, subsequent batches will only contain 1% seed honey because you save enough from the initial batch to use as a 10% seed for the next mix. These will have a smoother texture, which is something judges look for.

Robert Swallow, Shropshire BKA via *ebees*

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2013/2014 BBKA Examinations and Assessments

Jane Ridler - Exam/Education Secretary

Here are the BBKA exam successes for this season. Congratulations to everyone! It's been another good year in Essex with 20 applications for the Basic Assessment.

Modules (November 2013 and Spring 2014)

Module 1, Honeybee Management

Dave Eacott Harlow
David Mc Hattie (*Credit*) Dengie 100 & Maldon

Module 2, Honeybee Products and Forage

Chris Branch (*Credit*) Epping Forest

Module 3, Honeybee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning

Morag Chase (*Credit*) Colchester

Module 8, Honeybee Management, Health & History

Jane Ridler (*Credit*) Saffron Walden
Richard Ridler (*Credit*) Saffron Walden

Jane and Richard Ridler have now passed all of the BBKA Modules and have therefore achieved the Advanced Theory Certificate, both with credit. Chris Branch has achieved the Intermediate Theory Certificate, also with credit, for passing 4 of the Module papers.

Microscopy Certificate

David Blackwood Southend
Desmond Exworth Colchester
Jane Ridler Saffron Walden

Basic Assessment

Many thanks to our assessors this year – Pat Allen, Ted Grad, Deryck Johnson, Derek Webber, Jane and Richard Ridler, who give their services free.

Here are the successes this summer.

Robert Clare	Colchester
John Dutney	Epping Forest
Stephen Fairchild	Chelmsford
Simon Roberts	Epping Forest
John Finn	Chelmsford
Angela Mander	Romford
Pam Hughes	Chelmsford
Laura Pattle	Romford
David Lockie	Chelmsford
Kim Griffiths	Saffron Walden
Alec Wisbey	Chelmsford
Garth Milford	Saffron Walden
Paul Wisbey	Chelmsford
Brian Kiddy	Saffron Walden
Zoe Bridges	Dengie 100 & Maldon
Vanessa Wilkinson	Saffron Walden
Terry Pankhurst	Dengie 100 & Maldon

In order to promote the entry for the Basic Assessment and Module exams, and to acknowledge high level of success, the EBKA award two groups of prizes, the Miss Avey Awards and the Ted Hooper Awards. These, the Basic Assessment and the Spring Module Certificates will be presented at the Annual Conference on October 11th. The Autumn 2013 Modules and the Microscopy certificates were presented at the 2014 AGM.

If you are interested in joining our Module Study group this autumn, please email me at jane.ridler@uwclub.net. There is no obligation to take the exam but knowledge and experience at Basic Assessment level is expected.

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