

# THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



A magnificent bee garden display by Colchester Division  
at the Annual Tending Show in July

## Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

*Registered Charity number 1031419*

**No. 609**

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

**September  
2015**

# EBKA Divisional Meetings

## Diary dates for September / October 2015

<b>3 Sept</b>	Thursday 8.00pm	<b>Harlow</b>	<b>'Winter Preparation'</b> - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
<b>3 Sept</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Saffron Walden</b>	<b>'The Great Honey Bake Off'</b> - Preparing and showing off baking with honey. Sewards End Village Hall CB10 2LG
<b>4 Sept</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Romford</b>	<b>'Advice and guidance for Annual Honey Show'</b> - Jim McNeill. Chadwick Hall, St. Michaels Church, Main Road, Gidea Park, Romford RM2 5EL
<b>9 Sept</b>	Wednesday 7.30pm	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	Members Meeting - The Oakhouse, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
<b>12 &amp; 13 Sept</b>	Saturday / Sunday	<b>County Event</b>	<b>EBKA Annual Honey Show</b> at Barleylands Country Show, Billericay CM11 2UD
<b>19 Sept</b>	Saturday	<b>Epping Forest</b>	<b>'Equipment Husbandry Day'</b> - Chingford Horticultural Hall
<b>24 Sept</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Colchester</b>	<b>Microscopy</b> with Des Exworth. Langham Community Centre, School Road, Colchester CO4 5PA
<b>27 Sept</b>	Sunday 3.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	<b>Divisional Honey Show</b> - White Notley Village Hall, 43 The Street, White Notley CM8 1RH.
<b>1 Oct</b>	Thursday 8.00pm	<b>Harlow</b>	<b>'Wax Extraction'</b> - cleaning and making products. Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
<b>2 Oct</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Romford</b>	Talk by Ted Gradosielski. Chadwick Hall, St. Michaels Church, Main Road, Gidea Park, Romford RM2 5EL
<b>13 Oct</b>	Tuesday 7.30pm	<b>Saffron Walden</b>	<b>'Apitherapy'</b> with Barbara Dalby. Sewards End Village Hall CB10 2LG
<b>15 Oct</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Epping Forest</b>	'Microscopy' - Chingford Horticultural Hall
<b>21 Oct</b>	Wednesday 7.30pm	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	Members meeting. The Oakhouse. High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
<b>22 Oct</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Colchester</b>	<b>Trees and Bats</b> - Talk by Neil Catchpole. Langham Community Centre, School Road, Colchester CO4 5PA
<b>30 Oct</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	<b>'Making Mead'</b> - Mike Barke, Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY
<b>29— 31 October</b>	Thursday to Saturday	<b>National Event</b>	<b>National Honey Show</b> , Weybridge, Surrey
<b>31 Oct</b>	Saturday	<b>County Event</b>	<b>Annual Conference</b> - Ormiston Rivers Academy, Burnham-on-Crouch

**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**

## **Eileen Marrable - A sad loss**

**April 1935 – July 2015**

Eileen Marrable was a very long standing member of Romford Division, having started beekeeping with her husband, Dick, before any of our current members (thus over 35 years ago). When Dick died we feared that Eileen might give up beekeeping, but she did not. Instead she got much more involved with the activities of the Division, becoming one of the tutors in our Beginners Courses and running some bee disease and microscopy evenings. She began to study for the BBKA module exams and in 2014 she passed the final one, Module 8, thus gaining her Advanced Theory Certificate. Eileen served on the CEC for a number of years until recently, both as Spray & Disease Officer and as Minutes Secretary.

Many new beekeepers have benefited from Eileen's advice and experience, which was always given willingly and with a smile. Many people have commented that she had a laugh in her voice and was always cheerful.

Eileen's funeral was very well attended, and it was good to see so many Essex beekeepers there. Eileen had touched many people's lives and it was clear that she was well loved and respected. Her sons asked us in the Division to help with Eileen's beekeeping equipment, which we began by auctioning some of it at Romford's August meeting. Members bid very generously resulting in nearly £600 being collected for St Francis Hospice, which was where Eileen was looked after in her last few weeks.

It was a pleasure indeed to have known Eileen Marrable and we shall miss her very much.

Pat Allen *Secretary, Romford Division*

## **County Honey Show      *12th and 13th September***

### **Final Reminder and call for exhibits**

**Entry form and schedule are on the EBKA website**

Classes for Honey, Beeswax, Mead, Baking, Sweets,  
Photographs, etc. etc. ....

To help at the show contact Mike Barke:

[mjbarke@googlemail.com](mailto:mjbarke@googlemail.com)

- ◇ Free Entry
- ◇ Sell your own honey and other products
- ◇ Time off to visit the Show

# 2015 Essex Beekeepers' Annual Conference

## 31 October 2015

### Profiles of the Keynote Speakers

#### **Professor Francis Ratnieks – Sussex University**

Francis Ratnieks has been studying insects since he was a boy, and honey bees for the past 30 years. He took his PhD at Dyce Laboratory for Honey Bee Studies in the Department of Entomology at Cornell University.

At the EBKA 2015 Annual Conference, Professor Ratnieks will describe "Sussex Plan" research aimed at helping honey bee health and foraging. In terms of honeybee health, he will present results of a series of projects on the effectiveness of hygienic behaviour in controlling Varroa mites and Deformed Wing Virus, also on the effectiveness of other control methods against Varroa.



#### **Professor Lin Field – Rothamsted Research**



Lin Field, currently a Head of Department at Rothamsted Research has published more than 200 peer-reviewed papers and popular articles. Honorary Chair at the University of Nottingham and a President of the Royal Entomological Society. Her personal research interests are focussed on understanding an insecticide mode of action and resistance at the biochemical/molecular level and then using this knowledge to develop better pest control strategies.

In this presentation at the 2015 EBKA Conference, Professor Fields will discuss why we use insecticides and how they work. The debate on neonicotinoids, is ongoing and Professor Field hopes to be able to give an update on the position at the time of the conference and talk about some of the work she is doing at Rothamsted to try to help find compounds, which offer good pest control without damaging bees.

## Précis of Information sheet for BBKA Members sent out on 4th August 2015.

### **The EU moratorium**

December 1st 2013 was the start date for a two year EU moratorium put in force by the European Commission concerning clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiomethoxam and the withdrawal of professional use on crops considered attractive to bees (a long list including Oil Seed Rape / maize and on cereals apart from the seed treatment of winter cereals).

After the two year period during which reviews of the affected active substances take place the products cannot immediately be reinstated to their previous status. They would be dealt with by the regulatory perspective as 'new products' for those applications covered by the moratorium.

### **120 Day Emergency Authorisations**

Under certain circumstances it is possible for Member States (MS) to authorise the use of a plant protection product for a period not exceeding 120 days, for a limited and controlled use where such a measure is necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other means as set out in Article 53 of Regulation (EC) 1107/2009.

When issuing such emergency authorisations the MS concerned

must inform the other MSs and the Commission of the authorisation given, detailed information about the situation and any measures taken to ensure consume safety. The Commission will take a decision as to whether the MS can extend or repeat the emergency authorisation or whether the authorisation must be amended or withdrawn.

Authorisation would be given for a maximum period of 120 days and as such it is a temporary solution to a pest problem for which a permanent solution must be found.

Recently 120 day emergency authorisations have been granted for a very limited use of Modesto and Cruiser OSR to treat 5% of the planned sowing of OSR seed in England for use in a limited geographical area (Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) amounting to around 30,000 hectares. The seed has to be certified seed. Farmers will not be able to use treated seed after 20th November 2015.

The National Farmers Union ([www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)) has an informative Q&A webpage on the Emergency Authorisation for neonicotinoids.

*See the full text of the Information Sheet on the BBKA website.*

**THE NATIONAL**



**HONEY SHOW**

As usual I will take all your exhibits up to the National Honey Show, pick up all prize money and prize cards and bring them back. We need to make an effort to support the Essex section to keep up with the other counties that have their own sections.

So why not enter some classes in the Essex and in the open classes - it does not take much more time to get 4 - 6 jars out of 1 batch. There are different judges for different classes so you can get different results depending on the amount of competition.

Just send of your entry form in plenty of time so that your labels can be sent to you. Pack your exhibits securely so that they don't move about to much (they don't have to be individually packed - I need to get them out of the box easily) then get them over to me by

**TUESDAY 27th OCTOBER**

at 44 Ascension Road, Chase Cross,

Collier Row, Romford, **RM5 3RT.**

my phone no is **01708 765898,**

I will get them to the venue first thing Wednesday, this will allow you to visit the Show on any of the days without having to worry about your Exhibits. The Saturday is the same day as the Essex Conference so you can be at that as well as winning at the show!

The honey has started to flow in now so look out for a good Frame or different coloured honey and make a note of it for the show. Out of 250 Classes you should find something you can enter. Not got a lot of honey, then why not try a PHOTO or an ESSAY or even just a label on an empty jar.

Do be sure to read the Show Schedule for how and when to enter these classes .

Any problems, feel free to get in touch with me

Jim McNeill NHS Delegate

\*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

\*

**Note from Jane Mosley BBKA Operations Director/General Secretary:**

The ***Honey (England) Regulations 2015*** came into force on 24th June 2015, making BBKA Leaflet L010 obsolete. The wording of the regulations is clear, therefore to avoid repetition and reprinting costs if future changes are made, the decision has been taken to withdraw Leaflet L010, both in hard copy and the downloadable version from the BBKA website. The regulations can be accessed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1348/made>

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# Asian Hornet

## – on the way here?

Anne Pike via eBees



The Asian Hornet, which preys on honey bees, is spreading rapidly across France and other parts of mainland Europe, and there are fears its arrival here is only a matter of time – particularly in light of the unusually warm Spring weather. There are 118 sentinel apiaries around the country and all are on high alert for the invading hornets (and other unwanted visitors). Closely monitored traps will capture the first arrivals.

### Why does it matter?

The *Vespa velutina* preys on honey bees and could pose a serious risk to our colonies which in turn impacts on pollination etc. Queens build their nests in April and rapidly begin to lay eggs until the population reaches about 6,000 individuals. By July, the hornets begin hunting honey bees, chopping them up and feeding them to their larvae, which need a particular mix of proteins to thrive. According to reports, each Asian hornet can devour up to 50 honey bees a day, with swarms able to decimate bee colonies in just a few hours. Their bee hunting can continue well into November, according to the NBU. It looks as though the hornet's appetite isn't confined to honeybees; areas where they are present have very low populations of wasps and pollinators. DNA testing has revealed that all the Asian hornets in France are descendants of just one queen. Beekeepers in France set traps in their apiaries but they aren't 100 per cent effective.

### How can we deal with them?

The flippant answer is 'carefully!' In France they don Kevlar suits (which are bullet proof) and polycarbonate visors (like motorcyclists) before using a cherry-picker to access the nests, which are typically high up in a tree or on a building and are three feet in diameter. Specialist pest control teams swing into action in dawn raids. Once they capture the nest, it's killed by being put into a container containing sulphur fumes.



## What do they look like?

- The queens are up to 3 cm in length; workers up to 25 mm (slightly smaller than the native European hornet *Vespa crabro*)
- Entirely dark brown or black velvety body, bordered with a fine yellow band
- Only one band on the abdomen: 4th abdominal segment almost entirely yellow/orange
- Legs brown with yellow ends
- Head black with an orange-yellow face

## What can we do?

The BBKA issues the following advice:

“If you think you have seen one take a picture and email it with details of where you saw it and your contact information to the Non Native Species Secretariat - for more information go to their website [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

If it is safe to do so, you can send in a sample to the National Bee Unit for examination to confirm identity. However, do not under any circumstances disturb or provoke an active hornets' nest.”

Asian hornets were first spotted in south-west France in 2004, after apparently stowing away in a consignment of pottery which had arrived in Bordeaux from China. They have since colonised the whole of the west of the country and are also believed to have taken hold in the east. Their presence was confirmed in Spain in 2010 and in Belgium in 2011. A 2012 NBU study says their arrival in Britain is very likely and warns that once established their spread will be rapid.

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## Notes from the Central Executive Committee (CEC)

Meeting on 30 July 2015

Items taken at the above meeting included:

### **Eileen Marrable**

There was a quiet time in memory of Eileen who died on 8 July. Eileen was a well known and much respected beekeeper who had served the EBKA well over many years.

### **Outcome following the BBKA Special Delegates' Meeting (SDM) held on 20 June 2015**

Howard Pool, our BBKA link Trustee was invited to attend the meeting following the rejection of the proposition to the change of the date of the Annual Delegates' Meeting (ADM) to June from 2016. The other propositions to accept the budget presented for the year 2015/16 and capitation levels were withdrawn. Howard reported that the BBKA Executive Committee had agreed to establish a new Working Party with representatives from Member Associations to resolve the challenges facing the BBKA. The Working Party is not expected to report back until after the next Annual Delegates' Meeting. Howard also noted that 5 BBKA Trustees are due to retire and that replacement Trustees are being sought from the membership preferably with specialist skills needed to manage an Association whose membership has grown by 60% over the last 5 years. CEC members in thanking Howard for his frank review of the situation requested that the BBKA Executive Committee should be made aware of the need to demonstrate that they understand and appreciate the issues raised by the Member Associations.

### **Grant Requests**

It was agreed by the CEC to take forward the offer to provide all Divisions with up-to-date microscopes, a compound and a stereo microscope with necessary accessories. The outlay for this discounted "bulk buy" by the County would be matched by Divisions who would be responsible for 50% of the cost from their own funds. Divisions that have a pooled resource of microscopes will be available for general use by all members. It would be of particular help if all Divisions had microscopes of the same type for those undertaking a County wide Microscopy course or entering the BBKA examination. A communication has been sent to all Divisional Secretaries

asking that a consultation takes place within each Division to ascertain the take up of this venture. Responses have been requested by mid September just prior to the next CEC meeting.

The CEC in making best use of EBKA funds may also consider in the future similar purchases of a capital nature for other aspects of beekeeping where this shared cost will be of benefit to members in all participating Divisions.

### **The Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture**

This is to be arranged for April 2016 at the County Records Office, Chelmsford with Clive deBruyn and Margaret Thomas as the guest speakers.

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



## **BBKA Trustee Vacancies**

**In January 2016 there will be 5 Trustee Vacancies on the Executive Committee**

**The Trustees are looking for members with expertise in the following disciplines -**

**IT, Change Management, PR & Marketing, Governance and Environmental Science.**

**If you would like to be considered for any of these roles, please contact**

**Howard Pool, our BBKA Link Trustee on 01494 727687 or email [howard.pool@bbka.org.uk](mailto:howard.pool@bbka.org.uk)**

## SWEET REWARDS

Celia Davis - via eBees

**Nectar** is food for many insects: butterflies and moths, some flies, some beetles, bees of all kinds and some others too. It is an energy food, composed of water (30 – 90%), sugar in varying concentrations and of different kinds, but generally a mixture of fructose, glucose and sucrose, and a few other ingredients in very small quantities. More of those later. As adult insects are generally concerned only with searching out a mate and laying eggs, often in a very short time and involving a lot of flying about, energy is of prime importance, so the sugar in nectar is of great value.

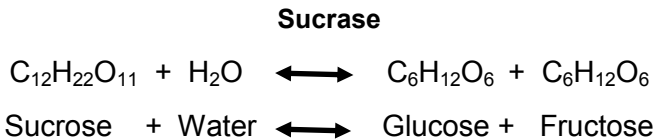
Nectar is produced in structures called nectaries and these are usually found inside the flower near the base, in a situation where, to reach them, the insect has to brush past the reproductive organs of the flower, so collecting/delivering pollen. Nectaries are made up of groups of cells which are able to extract substances from the plant sap, producing a solution which is passed to the outside. This may be stored in some way so that there is an abundant supply when an insect visits. Plants do not produce nectar continuously, often requiring specific conditions of soil type and moisture, weather, temperature and shade, and each plant type will have a diurnal pattern where it will produce best at a certain time of day. The composition also varies with the time of day, some nectars containing much more sugar at certain times.

Once a flower is pollinated it ceases to produce nectar and may signal this in different ways eg. the individual florets of white clover (*Trifolium repens*) hang down and turn brown and the centre of the forget-me-not flower (*Myosotis* spp) changes from yellow to white. Bees can recognise these signals and will avoid those flowers.

**Transportation** - Most insects simply feed on the nectar, but our honey bees need to transport some of it back to the nest where it can be turned into honey. This is done solely to provide the colony with a food source during dearth periods, and particularly in winter when few plants flower. The worker bee carries the nectar back to the nest in a structure called the crop. This is part of the bee's digestive system but is separated from the rest of the system by a valve, the proventriculus, which prevents the passage of the nectar from the crop into the next section of the gut. Once back in the nest, the bee regurgitates the nectar and passes it to one or more receiver bees, which put it into a cell in the nectar collection area. The forager bee will have added enzymes, produced in her hypopharyngeal glands, to the nectar.

The ones we are concerned with are:

1. Sucrase (invertase) This breaks sucrose molecules into glucose and fructose. We can show this in a simple equation:



The chemical process of adding water to a molecule to break it down into its constituent parts is called hydrolysis.

2. Glucose oxidase which acts on some of the glucose to break it down into hydrogen peroxide (an antibacterial) and gluconic acid. The receiver bees and nectar processors will add more of the same enzymes.

**The all-important physical change** — As well as the chemical changes, the nectar has to undergo a physical change where its water content is reduced to about 18%. The hive is maintained at a high temperature of around 34.5°C so that helps in the evaporation process. In addition, large numbers of bees produce air currents through the hive by fanning their wings. During a heavy nectar flow it is fascinating to listen to the noise from the hives in the evening, where thousands of bees are fanning their wings, and to see those at the entrance helping in this process. The scent of the nectar will also be wafted out of the hives. The nectar will be 'rolled' on the tongues of processor bees and spread thinly over the cells, both methods exposing a greater surface area to the air. Once the water content is reduced to 18% the bees will fill up the cells and cap them over with an impermeable wax capping. This keeps out the moisture present in the hive atmosphere, as the very concentrated solution of sugar is hygroscopic, attracting water if it is present. A practical point to remember is that the collected nectar takes up far more space in supers than the finished honey so sufficient space is essential.

**The importance of honey** - So why go to all this trouble? An ability to produce a food for the winter is essential to the maintenance of the perennial colony. Nectar, the bees' natural food, will not keep for any time as its high water content will result in fermentation, where the natural yeasts in the nectar will use the sugar to produce carbon dioxide and alcohol. Reducing the water content of the nectar will avoid this as the sugar concentration is then too high for the yeasts to function. The process provides us with a luxury food much enjoyed by many people. And what of those apparently

unimportant constituents of nectar I mentioned earlier? They include a wide range of compounds but they are present in tiny amounts. However, once the water has been removed, these substances are more significant and endow the honey with a characteristic flavour, aroma and colour, so giving us the wide variety of honeys which we enjoy.

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Regards, Honey Helperr

## Who's who and how to contact them

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**Pat Allen** Hon CLM

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### Regional Bee Inspectors for EBKA Region:

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



# THORNE Sale Days

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