THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER

The North Wind Doth Blow
Photograph and verse by Paul F Abbott - Southend-on-Sea Division

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex
Registered Charity number 1031419

Issue No. 637 **January 2018**

Divisional Meetings - dates for January & February 2018

4 Jan	**Thursday 8.00pm**	**Romford**	**AGM** - Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
15 Jan	**Monday 7.30pm**	**Chelmsford**	**AGM and Presentation by Jane Moseley from *Eat Natural*** - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford
17 Jan	**Wed 7.30pm**	**Dengie 100 & Maldon**	**AGM** - Speaker George Clouston, Arnia. The Oakhouse, High street, Maldon CM9 5PR
24 Jan	**Wed 7.30pm**	**Southend**	**EGM** & talk by Chad Colby-Blake on late winter tasks and spring preparation. WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED
26 Jan	**Friday 7.00pm**	**Saffron Walden**	**AGM and Annual Dinner.** Great Dunmow Day Centre, Chequers Lane, Dunmow CM6 1EQ More details; info@swbka.org
1 Feb	**Thursday 8.00pm**	**Romford**	'**New season preparation'** - Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
8 Feb	**Thursday 7.30pm**	**Saffron Walden**	'**The Asian Hornet'** by Andrew Durham, Cambridge-shire beekeepers - Sewards End Hall, Radwinter Road CB10 2LG
19 Feb	**Monday 7.30pm**	**Chelmsford**	'**Beekeepers Question Time'** - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford
21 Feb	**Wed 7.30pm**	**Dengie 100 & Maldon**	'**Coping with the Swarms'** - Clive de Bruyn. The Oakhouse, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PR
28 Feb	**Wed 7.30pm**	**Southend**	**'Bob Smith'** subject tbc. WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED

The North Wind Doth Blow
And we shall have snow
And what will poor apis do then?
Poor thing.
She'll sit in a hive
And keep herself warm
And cluster her head under her wing
Poor thing.

Cover photograph and verse by Paul F Abbott

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deal easier than climbing ladders or chopping away branches. The combs were 2-3 feet long, so it must have been a well-established colony. After shooing away the sheep that were using the fallen tree as an adventure playground, and then assessing the situation, we realised that luckily it would be quite a straightforward rescue, just a bit fiddly and sticky.

The combs were long and had the honey stored in an arch over the narrow top edge and all down one side, the rest of the comb being empty, apart from a very little bit of sealed brood. They were quite well covered in bees.

We used a common method of dealing with these combs, which is to shake as many bees as possible off into a nearby hive, them to cut the combs to shape and fix the pieces into empty frames and put them in the hive. We had to rotate the combs through 90 degrees to do this and hoped the bees would think a sideways home was better than no home.

Any empty comb we took home to render down and we tried hard to remove all the crushed honeycomb under the tree, as late wasps were enjoying the feast and the poor bees had enough to contend with! We gave them a very small entrance because of the wasps and they were soon fanning away, to attract stragglers. At no time did we see a queen, so just had to hope that she had survived and been shaken into the hive safely.

The bees looked very happy to have a home again and we piled branches around the hive to keep the sheep off until we could collect it and let the estate staff deal with the remains of the fallen tree.

The hive was later taken to an isolated spot, as we had no idea what its disease status was, and will hopefully survive the winter, with a bit more TLC.

PS. A quick look a fortnight later showed a tiny new patch of sealed worker brood - we got the queen!.

Judith Rowbottom (Harrogate & Ripon BKA - via eBees)

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . . .

1880 was an important year. That was the year that the EBKA was formed. At that time EBKA was a single entity within the County, just six years after the formation of the British Beekeepers. Within Essex there were individual groups of beekeepers who did very much their own thing. There was some debate as to whether EBKA wanted to accept affiliated groups into the EBKA, or even if their rules allowed it.

The question was asked "Was EBKA willing to accept other Associations within Essex and what should the affiliation fee be?" After much debate and definite bending of the rules, it was decided to accept affiliated groups. In 1918, Saffron Walden applied for affiliation and were accepted — Chelmsford followed, as did others. All transactions to be strictly cash, and EBKA were not to be responsible for the debts of the affiliated groups.

There is very little record of the various Co-ops and branches in the county at this time, for example, Braintree surfaced in 1919 and amalgamated with Wickham Bishops in 1924, reverting to Braintree (as a Division) in 1959. Ongar in 1920, but for how long? Ilford in 1921, Colchester not until 1931 and Battlesbridge was never heard of again.

There is no official record of these initial affiliations and there was nothing put before an AGM and nothing recorded in the Minutes of the 1919 AGM.

The affiliated Branches (Divisions) were still very much self-governing The benefits of membership to the Chelmsford & District branch, for example, was: advice and help and two visits a year from an expert. In addition, free disinfectants together with candy at reduced rates.

(*'Essex Beekeeper'* Editor's Note: Information from 'One Hundred Years of Honey')

Will there be any celebrations in 2018 to commemorate these initial affiliations? Although we do not have any members from that time (wouldn't that be amazing?), both saffron Walden and Chelmsford have long standing members, some of whom will have been involved with bees, perhaps via a family member, but not as an EBKA member for 50 years. So being unsure of those half century members (*I will look into that further*), I have given the numbers for a quarter of a century plus.

In Saffron Walden and Chelmsford, both Divisions with presently around 100 members plus - Saffron Walden has 24 beekeepers who have been members for over 25 years, with Chelmsford having 10.

Jean Smye - Editor

More Imminent than you may think

With another nest having been discovered in North Devon (and destroyed) the onslaught of these harpies is becoming more and more threatening, and also more inevitable. On September 28th, a hornet was discovered in North Devon by a beekeeper who contacted the NBU, and all the Bee Inspectors in christendom went charging off to Woolacombe to track down the nest, which they did and successfully destroyed it - ***but this photograph wasn't taken in North Devon.***

It was taken in Roscoff on the northern French coast on October 6th. I was actually trying to photograph bees when this creature and several other Asian hornets made their presence known to me. They were feasting on the ivy where I had taken photographs several times before. Most importantly, they were 500 metres from the cross channel ferry '*Armorique'*, which was sitting in the ferry port. I swung the camera around to try and get a picture of the ferry. You can see the port building behind the white building, but the ferry, which had its back to the camera, is obscured by the large tree.

How long will it be before more hornets hop on the ferry?

Fred Clarke - Chair of Somerton & District Beekeeping Association - via *eBees*

Declared exotic diseases under the *Animal Diseases Act 2005* are:

Africanised bees,

Acariasis tracheal mite (*Acarapis woodi*),

Africanised honeybees,

Asian honeybee (*Apis cerana*),

Braula fly (*Bee louse, Braula coeca*),

Dwarf honeybee (*Apis florae*),

Giant honeybee (*Apis dorsata*),

Tropilaelaps mite (*Tropilaelaps clareae*),

Varroasis (*Varroa destructor*) and

Varroasis (*Varroa jacobsoni*).

You can notify a suspected or confirmed notifiable disease by contacting Access Canberra on ** ** ** and asking for the ACT Chief Veterinary Officer. For further information on Exotic and Endemic Diseases in the ACT, refer to the *Animal Diseases Act 2005*.

via *eBees* from the Newsletter of the Beekeepers Association of the ACT.

MOVING HOUSE!

When the remains of hurricane Ophelia struck Britain in October 2017, Yorkshire got off more lightly than some parts of the country. There were some casualties though, one being a truly majestic ash tree in the farmland of Ripley Castle. One half of this behemoth had split from the trunk and crashed down in the high winds. It was hollow and rotten inside, the cause of its instability, but also the home of a feral colony of honeybees.

When we arrived we found the combs had detached completely from the tree and were lying on the ground underneath it, which made salvage a great deal easier

I included this article as I found it interesting and thought provoking. Do EBKA members feel that we could benefit from such a Code of Practice? Editor

Beekeeping down under ……

(ACT stands for : Australia Capital Territory - i.e. Canberra)

Code of Practice for Beekeeping in Residential Areas of the ACT:

The *Code of Practice for Beekeeping in Residential Areas of the ACT* provides minimum standards for the management of urban beehives. Urban beekeepers are strongly encouraged to observe the Code which aims to ensure that good beekeeping practices are maintained in the ACT. The Code is a good reference point for amateur backyard beekeepers, as well as members of the public concerned about beekeeping practices in their neighbourhood. It is important to be aware that the *Animal Diseases Regulation 2006* prohibits the keeping of honeybees other than in frame hives. The regulation also prohibits a person from exposing honey or honey comb, other than in a frame hive, in a way that honeybees may have access to it as this can lead to the spread of diseases. For the same reason, a bee-keeper should never feed honey to honey bees.

Registration for bee hives:

Canberra beekeepers are required to register their hives under amendments to the *Animal Diseases Act 2005*. This helps the ACT Government easily identify and contact beekeepers in the event of any possible outbreak of bee-related disease. Registration is free and valid for three years and can be done online.

Both commercial and non-commercial operators need to register, unless they have already registered in NSW. Registered beekeepers are also asked to adhere to the **Code of Practice for Beekeeping in Residential Areas**, maintain a record of movement or sale or disposal of beehives; and promptly notify the ACT Chief Veterinary Officer of any signs of a notifiable disease.

Notifiable Diseases:

Diseases of bees are administered under the *Animal Diseases Act 2005*. A number of bee diseases are notifiable (declared endemic and exotic diseases) under ACT legislation. This means there is a legal obligation to notify the ACT Government if you know or suspect that a hive is infected with a notifiable disease. Declared endemic diseases under the *Animal Diseases Act 2005* are: **American foulbrood** and **European foulbrood.**

Thoughts for the year ahead . . . . . .

Celia Davis - *Warwickshire Beekeeper* via ebees

There are many and varied challenges that can arise in beekeeping. The one thing that no beginners' course or any other sort of course come to that, can give you is experience, although you can always use other people's, provided that it is done with caution.

Experience comes with time and colony numbers and we count it in colony years, i.e. the number of colonies multiplied by the number of years you have kept them. So, a person with 6 hives for 1 year will have the same number of colony years as someone else with 1 hive for 6 years. The idea behind this is that every colony is different, every season is different and different challenges arise every season too. However, generally speaking, the person with more hives will fare better as they will be able to compare and contrast all the time and will have more wriggle room when it comes to trying out different techniques. One hive is not really viable anyway and it is always best to have two as an absolute minimum. We all make mistakes however many years we have kept bees and I go on enthusiastically making them now, after more years and colonies than I care to think about. The important point is to learn from those mistakes, recognise where you went wrong and try to ensure that you do not make them again.

Those of you that know me know that I set great store by beekeepers under-standing their bees and the thinking behind the various procedures we carry out. So, it is essential to understand what the bees are trying to do and to remember that their agenda is not necessarily the same as ours.

Put simply, a honeybee colony tries to build up in the early part of the year, reach a point where it is really strong with lots of bees and sealed brood, and then split into two (swarm). The parent colony and the swarm then have to work their socks off to get in sufficient nectar and pollen to build the colonies back up to strength again and produce sufficient honey to see them safely through the winter. Providing that the two colonies survive until the spring, this has been a success from their point of view.

Drones are another place where bees and beekeepers tend to disagree. Many beekeepers denigrate drones as wasteful of colony resources and useless individuals. From our point of view and looking at the individual colony, that may be true, they consume more food than workers in the larval stage and contribute nothing to the hive economy. But consider it from the bees' point of view. Drones carry the colony's genes and the more fit, healthy drones that are reared, travel out to the drone congregation areas and manage to mate with young queens, the more successful that colony

has been at spreading its genes into the general bee population. We can compare it in human terms to the Mongol Empire, founded by Genghis Khan. He fathered many children over a huge area of the world and they, in turn, produced many more, so that the Mongol genes were spread far and wide throughout a huge part of Asia and Europe and now, with the use of DNA, we are able to trace signs of Genghis in millions of people. Very successful. So look at those drones with different eyes and appreciate them for the valuable members of the bee colony that they are.

So where does that bring us? Faced with a problem/challenge, stop to think. Consider what the bees are trying to do and consider also the possible results of any action you are about to take. And don't panic! If necessary, go and have a cup of tea while you make decisions, write down the essential steps if you think you will get in a mess and, if everything goes wrong even after all that, learn from it and do it differently next time.

Wings as Impellers - How Honey Bees fan

Research Article by Jacob M. Peters, Nick Gravish & Stacey A. Combes

Journal of Experimental Biology & via ebees from Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA

Over 285 million years of evolutionary pressure has perfected and optimised insect wings for flight. Honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) are remarkable fliers that regularly carry heavy loads of nectar and pollen, supported by a flight system – the wings, thorax and flight muscles – that one might assume is optimized for aerial locomotion. However, honey bees also use this system to perform other crucial tasks that are unrelated to flight.

When ventilating the nest, bees grip the surface of the comb or nest entrance and fan their wings to drive airflow through the nest, and a similar wing-fanning behaviour is used to disperse volatile pheromones from the Nasonov gland.

This behaviour promotes convective cooling and/or gas exchange. Both scenting and cooling require wing movements while the bee is otherwise stationary. Thus the wings have to be co-opted from inducing propulsion to also serve as impellers, which represents several physical challenges to an insect. The primary direction of fluid movement generated by the wings must be shifted from downward (as in flight) to horizontal (as in fanning). Further, the kinetics of flapping must be altered to avoid disadvantageous contact with any solid surface, which could cause wing damage, reducing flight performance and affect survival. Honey bees beat their wings about 11,400 times a minute and to achieve this they reduce their flapping frequency by about 30% and alter their wing movement.