

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Honey Extractor powered by a
Lister engine.

Photos on both covers taken by Deryck Johnson

Monthly Magazine of the E.B.K.A

No. 552

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Essex Beekeeper's Association

The Essex Beekeepers' Association is a registered charity whose object is to further the craft of beekeeping in Essex.

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Please ensure that all material for publication is received by the Editor before the 10th of the preceding month to publication.

December 2010 and January 2011

- 2 Dec. *Thursday 7.30pm* **Harlow** at Kings Church Red Willow. Christmas Party and Colin Wright finalises details for the AGM.
- 3 Dec. *Friday 8.00pm* **Romford** Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park. Christmas Social.
- 8 Dec. *Wednesday 7.30pm* **Braintree** Microscopy class at Tabor College Panfield Lane Braintree CM7 5XP. Telephone Stuart Mitson if you need further details: 01376 340683.
- 16 Dec. *Thursday 7.30pm* **Epping Forest** at Chingford Horticultural Society Hall, Larkshall Rd. Chingford E4 6NH. Christmas Social. If you wish to come it will be necessary to buy a ticket, cost £3.00, which can be obtained by contacting Paola Nunn by emailing km.electricsitd@googlemail.com. These will be available from 21 October.
- 17 Dec. *Friday 8.00pm* **Braintree** at The Constitutional Club, Braintree. A Christmas gathering and quiz. Please bring some nibbles.
- 2011
- 6 Jan. *Thursday 7.30pm* **Harlow** at Kings Church Red Willow. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 14 Jan. *Friday 8.00pm* **Romford** Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 17 Jan. *Monday 7.30pm* **Chelmsford** Link Hall Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 20 Jan. *Thursday 7.30pm* **Epping Forest** at Chingford Horticultural Society Hall, Larkshall Rd. Chingford E4 6NH. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 21 Jan. *Friday 7.15pm* **Saffron Walden** at Dunmow Day Centre, CM6 1AE. Divisional Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner.
- 26 Jan. *Wednesday 7.30pm* **Southend** at Women's Institute Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 27 Jan. *Thursday 7.30pm* **Colchester** at Langham Community Centre. Divisional Annual General Meeting.
- 28 Jan. *Friday 8.00pm* **Braintree** at The Constitutional Club, Braintree. Divisional Annual General Meeting.

County Pheromones
Richard Ridler, Chairman EBKA

Those of you who were at the Conference will be in no doubt about the value of research relating to honeybees. There is so much we just don't understand, so many more environmental and other threats and so little research being undertaken. As Peter Neumann pointed out there is little or no commercial imperative for such research. He also rather worryingly told us that because the issues surrounding varroa are so intractable the research into it is reducing.

As beekeepers I hope you feel some responsibility for trying to improve the well-being of honeybees generally and that means increasing our knowledge. The CEC certainly believes that EBKA should be encouraging and supporting appropriate research. Research costs money.

EBKA contributes £500/a to support the work of Ricky Kather; this comes from your membership fee. Along with similar contributions from other East Anglian beekeeping groups this leverages a much greater amount of Science Research Council funding. Hopefully Ricky's work will tell us why varroa are apparently not noticed by honeybees (would you go around with the equivalent of a large hand-bag on your back without complaining?).

The annual membership renewal form offers an option to give more to honeybee research. I very much hope you will take up this option because your bees need every bit of research possible. EBKA will either use the funds collected to support a second project funded in conjunction with the other East Anglian Beekeepers or add the money to the BBKA research fund.

Letter to the Editor

In an effort to move away from the standard run-of-the-mill labels I have had a new design done by a friend of mine. The problem now is finding a reasonably priced quality printer other than Thorne and National. Have any other members been down the same route and could make a recommendation?

Sincerely, Deryck Johnson
(deryck@honeyhouse.co.uk)

Essex Beekeepers' Annual Conference 2010

Andy Sivell

*Andy Sivell is a journalist, copy writer and magazine publisher. He got his first colony and took up beekeeping in 2010. He maintains a blog, *Diary of a Nervous Beekeeper*, which can be found at <http://www.beekeepingadvice.co.uk>*



Photos taken by Geoff Mills

On Saturday I attended the Essex Beekeepers' Association's Annual Conference in Great Dunmow, an event far more exciting than its title would have you believe. It featured neither rousing anthems, nor resolutions or floor fights, nor even a gavel-banging chair person. What it did include were a number of first-class lectures on the present and future of beekeeping, each one introduced (in remarkably relaxed and professional manner) by a different member of the EBKA. Two of the speakers

kindly allowed me to make their presentations available for download here.

Dr Peter Neumann of the Swiss Bee Research Centre in Bern was first up. A future TV star and spokesperson for the international beekeeping community if ever there was one, Dr Neumann cut quite a dash. At nearly 7 foot tall he dresses, if you can imagine this, like a cross between a university lecturer (which he is) and a teddy boy (which, being a German based in Switzerland, I'm guessing he isn't). Despite talking for well over an hour he kept the audience spell-bound, before spending the remainder of his time at conference being followed around by a crocodile of enthusiasts, courteously answering an unending stream of questions.

Dr Neumann's lecture entitled, 'Apiculture in decline? Colony losses and the future of pollination' went right to the heart of why beekeeping has attracted so many new recruits in recent years. Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is now a worldwide phenomenon, while its causes remain – it seems rightly – much disputed. Having listened to him I'm inclined toward the view that if Dr Neumann hasn't yet pinpointed the source of the problem, no-one has. Logically, all the evidence points to it being a combination of intensive (professional) beekeeping practices, industrialised farming and insecticides, and parasites and pathogens. No surprises there then. But here's the thing: in the course of pre-



Dr Peter Neumann with David Learmonth

senting a compelling case in favour of standardised measurement and data collection Dr Neumann revealed some of the statistical anomalies that existing – and reputable – research has already thrown up. For example in the US, which is often regarded as the epicenter of the CCD problem, professional beekeepers actually list CCD as being not even among their top five concerns.

Dr Neumann's slide showing worldwide recorded instances of the Varroa destructor mite, almost exclusively confined to the northern hemisphere, drew an audible gasp from the 150-strong audience. It also acted as the perfect introduction to the second speaker, Ricarda Kather, a PhD student at the University of Sheffield*. If Dr Neumann was the harbinger of bad news then 'Ricky' was the cavalry... sort of.

Her presentation on 'The effect of Varroa and Deformed Wing Virus (DWV) on the honey bee recognition system' couldn't help but leave me with a grudging respect for the annoying little pest, which has adapted itself almost perfectly to life as a bee colony parasite. Not so much that I won't still nuke the little blighters given half a chance, mind you. Ricky Kather's proposed experiments will hopefully prove most helpful in that battle.

Lunch was followed by a short pitch by author and beekeeping expert Clive De Bruyn on behalf of the charity Bees for Development, which in turn was followed by a presentation on the wildlife and bee varieties native to Essex by John Hall, director of the Essex Wildlife Trust.

I confess that by this point the effects of a warm pastie and cool glass of cider were starting to kick-in. All morning we'd been under siege, but now all was well with the world. John's slide show was a fabulous advertisement for the Essex countryside, leaving me to muse on what a very pleasant place we lived in, with all those ancient forests, and coastal marshes, and beautiful insects ...and varieties of bee...

...I don't think I actually dropped off. I'm sure it was the buzz of anticipation that hit me like a shot of adrenaline just as the prize-giving was getting underway. Having been a volunteer helper on the Essex Beekeepers' Association stand at the Essex County Show I saw the quality of the honey products produced by club members. As I now discovered, the trophies for being best in show were pretty impressive too.

And so ended the day.

The BBKA Exams and Assessments Explained.

Jane Ridler, Examinations/Education Secretary

BBKA Examinations and Assessments

Module Exams

Examinations at the BBKA go back to 1882 – only 8 people entered that first year. There have been various updates over the years, indeed, you may have an Intermediate or Senior certificate from the 1980's or 90's. There is now a firm delineation between the practical assessments and theory exams (your preference may be towards the practical or the theory - you don't *have* to do both), but if your aim is to be a Master Beekeeper then you need everything! Not many of us aspire to that achievement but it is becoming more important that significant numbers of beekeepers take qualifications. The reason is twofold. Firstly, both the BBKA and EBKA profile has changed dramatically in the last few years so that beginners form at least a third of members. It is vital that the now relatively smaller group of more experienced beekeepers can pass on accurate knowledge and good beekeeping practice. Despite the many excellent beginners' courses happening in the divisions, a great deal of learning still happens in general conversation at divisional meetings so all established beekeepers must take some responsibility. Secondly, as the number of beekeepers and colonies waxes again, especially in urban areas, and the media continue to highlight bees in every context, our activities are much more exposed to the general public. I'm certainly not saying that the only good beekeepers are those with certificates, but working for them does stimulate learning.

I'm going to write a little on the Basic Assessment and General Husbandry in the next couple of issues of Essex Beekeeper, but starting here with the Module Theory Exams. My feeling is that you'll probably need a longer lead up to these exams for revision. There are 7 Modules (1-8, but Module 4 is no longer available)

- Module 1 - Honeybee Management
- Module 2 - Honeybee Products and Forage
- Module 3 - Honeybee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning
- Module 5 - Honeybee Biology
- Module 6 - Honeybee Behaviour
- Module 7 - Selection and Breeding of Honeybees
- Module 8 - Honeybee Management and History

The next examination day is 19 March 2011. Entry application must be by 10th February and costs £20 per module. If you have a group in your Division you can set up the room and invigilation locally, or travel to where another division has this organised. All syllabuses and specimen question papers can be downloaded from the BBKA website. Many people start with Module 1, Honeybee Management, but you don't have to. There's no truth in the rumour that any module is more or less difficult in the way it's set – however your own skills and

knowledge may suit you more to one than another. Correspondence courses are available or you can set up various self-help strategies within your Division. Please note that there's been a review for 2011 so make sure you get up to date information. The exam is now marked out of 100 points instead of 75, with the short answer section B offering 60 marks and the single essay answer in Section C 30 marks. As an ex biology and chemistry teacher, I'd say that the exams are more 'O' level in essence than GCSE, but section C requires an A level approach. Modules are very knowledge based and more specific than these exams, so if you're not really an 'exam person' but know your bee stuff, you can still do very well. Whoever you are, you have to work quickly!

For results, only you see your actual mark. The pass mark is 60% which seems quite high, but if you have the qualification it implies to all that you have more than a smattering of knowledge and competence in that aspect of beekeeping! The credit and distinction status show knowledge and understanding of technical details at an impressive level. Remarking and feedback are options, for a fee, but all the papers are double marked and moderated so that standards are ensured. So why not have a go! I'm happy to tell you more, either personally or at a divisional meeting.

The Honey Extractor as featured on the Front Cover Deryck Johnson

On day one of the Essex Country Show a buzz went round the EBKA marquee which was not coming from the bees. Some fascinating beekeeping history was not far away.

On the plot alongside, and alongside that, and yet again, were scores of vintage small stationary engines. Driving all manner of fascinating contraptions thought up by their owners and renovators. There was one in particular which caught our interest. This was a vintage Lister single cylinder driving an ancient honey extractor with a difference. Whilst we are used to our extractors spinning around a vertical axis, this one, albeit tangential, spun around a horizontal axis. It was fitted with an electric motor but had hand-crank capability which had the advantage of needing no bevel gearing. The handle fitted straight on to the centre spindle.

It had been discovered three years ago in a North Devon scrap-yard by its present owner Jeff Hunt who had adapted it to be driven by his Lister. Originally manufactured by Mountain Grey Apiaries in Brough, Yorkshire it was made in galvanised steel sheet which had seen better days but it was still an intriguing piece of machinery.

Editorial

I don't usually write an editorial but here is the exception which proves the rule. Recently I was given back-copies of the 'Essex Beekeeper' from 1995. I would like to thank Mrs G Barford, of Manningtree, Essex who very thoughtfully donated these magazines. I have been looking through them and over the coming months will be reprinting articles from them.

The first archive collection, which appears in this issue, covers four months in 1995 when a new Editor was found for the magazine. After some firm words from the outgoing editor and with an interim editor for one month in the guise of Jean Smye, the magazine had a new editor, Pat Allen. The hopes and aspirations found in Pat's first editorial are nearly identical to those hopes for a successful magazine today. A successful magazine required interesting articles and had to be successful in communicating important information to its members across the Association. However, since 1995 the internet has changed the means of communication which has meant that Divisions organise themselves through email lists and dedicated web pages. Also, virtually all my copy for the magazine is sent electronically; to ensure a reasonable flow of interesting articles for the magazine, a cooperative was created which allows contributing editors of local beekeeping magazines across the country to share articles which can be reprinted in their respective magazine. I still would like further articles from members of our Association!

I am very aware that the magazine is still the main means of communication to members across the Association, particularly when detailing events in neighbouring Divisions. I think the diary pages could be expanded with upcoming events being given a fuller explanation. Also, an account of past events may prove to be interesting. Only once have I had to rely on the internet rather than the magazine to publish information. This occasion was to provide a full list of awards won by competitors in the 2010 Barleylands Honey Show. Jim McNeill provided the list but at four pages would have been an excessive use of our monthly magazine. The list of awards is very important and should be distributed, but I have chosen to make it available through the EBKA web site.

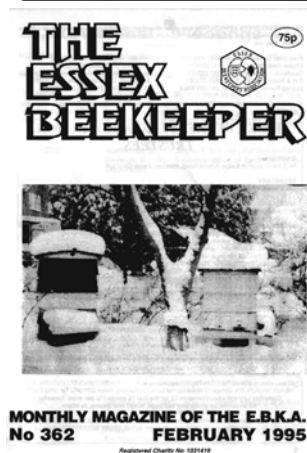
The Honey Extractor featured on the front page:

I wonder where a beekeeper was expected to place the honey extractor when taking off his honey? If the extractor and motor were outside then bees from far and wide would descend and soon make the whole operation impossible. If it was conducted in a bee tight area then the beekeeper was probably at risk of being poisoned by the fumes from the engine.

Please does anyone have any details on the extractor (rather than the motor); I have searched online but there were very few results which shed light on this machine.

From the Archives—1995

The trials of finding a new Editor



Editorial from Essex Beekeeper February 1995

Reports that The Essex Beekeeper was about to become a quarterly magazine were, it would appear, premature. A 'decision' was made rather hurriedly and failed to take into account its effects on the members, the advertisers, and on the associations income. So, here am I to tell you that the whole subject will be up for discussion at the AGM on Saturday 25th March. Make no mistake, the situation is serious, and an editor, and/or an editorial team, are urgently needed. Jenny Barling has now followed previous editors, including myself, into editorial retirement. Knowing how

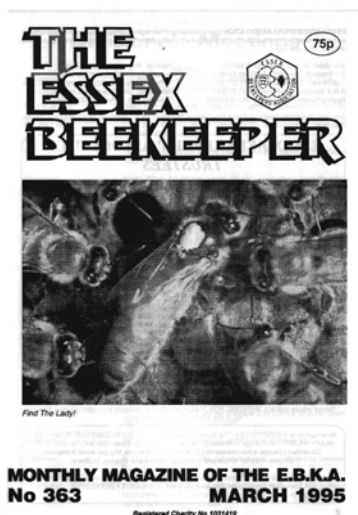
and relentless the job of editor is, I propose a vote of thanks to Jenny on behalf of all our readers for a job

well done. Lets hope we can find a few members with similar commitment in the near future.

When I first became editor, we had about 850 members of EBKA. Now, I'm told, we number about 500. There has been a drop in the membership of all beekeeping associations in the UK over recent years. How much of this is due to varroa, and how much is due to the fact that most beekeepers are of more mature years does not really matter. The problem is that the number of jobs that need to be done does not reduce, but the number of members available to do them does; in our case by 40%. However, lets be positive about this . What it really means is that if you want to do a job for, and within the EBKA, your chances of getting it are much improved. Anyway, current vacancies include; Membership secretary; Minutes secretary and Advertising secretary. Any beekeeper interested in these vacancies can get full details from Jean Smye on 0621 850605

Returning to the subject of The Essex Beekeeper, my own proposal would be that each of our ten divisions would adopt a month, and for that month, each year, would produce The Essex Beekeeper. This would provide activities for more than one divisional meeting; ensure a fresh approach each month, and involve more members than ever before. With a years notice, (same month each year ?), there should be no problems with the magazine being late. The magazine title would include the name of the division that produced it, and natural competition would ensure quality. The remaining two months (only ten divisions) could possibly be covered by a panel of ex editors! Anybody like to second my proposal? I have tried to keep this months contributions topical and trust that you all find time' to read a magazine that is giving so many volunteers a headache.

David C.Start, Editor.



Editorial from Essex Beekeeper March 1995

Discussions about the future of The Essex Beekeeper, continue. At the time of writing this editorial, I have no idea how the problems are going to be resolved.

How important is The Essex Beekeeper to its readers ? Perhaps we need to ask around. At a recent divisional AGM, I was astounded to hear a chairman say, in response to the question "why have members NOT received an Essex Beekeeper for four months", "Oh, I hadn't noticed; its not that important is it ? think of all the postage we're saving". Is this what members really think? A lot of people, including myself, would be saved a lot of heartache if this was true. I wonder if the members of that division think its not important when they are denied regular monthly

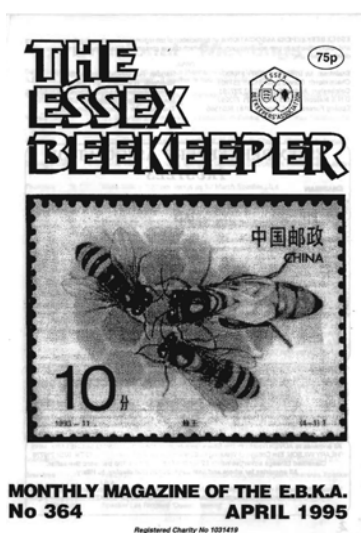
advice on how to treat their bees; denied access to other divisions meetings, and more especially to Clive's courses, the success of which will determine whether or not he keeps his job, and we keep a CBI. Perhaps we are living through the decline and fall of the EBKA.

Of course, you are thinking that the mailing secretary concerned will have used the AGM to distribute the overdue magazines. Wrong! such an obvious solution does not seem to have occurred to him. To the best of my knowledge, its now five months since' the unfortunate members of that division have received an 'Essex Beekeeper' A strong case, I suggest, for the refund of 5 x 75p per member. When one recalls that at least two printers have lost the contract to produce The Essex Beekeeper, because they couldn't get it out by the first of the month, and hundreds of hours have been spent over the years discussing how to get this magazine to members 'on time', then one might be forgiven for thinking 'what's it all about'?

Since returning to the editorial hot seat, I have been reminded of something that used to bother me the first time round. It is the speed and certainty with which some divisional representatives will say 'my members won't want to do that', without it ever occurring to them that some of their members just might. If you represent 50 or more beekeepers, the obvious course, whatever the suggestion, is to take it back to divisional meetings for discussion. At the moment, I feel that we are in danger of becoming victims of our representatives prejudices. Are they masters, or servants? That thought in itself might make for a useful discussion at divisional meetings.

Hopefully, this is farewell. I look forward to .greeting whoever emerges as the new editor. I wish you all a brilliant beekeeping season. May 1995 be the one to remember.

David C. Start Editor



Editorial from Essex Beekeeper April 1995

I make no apologies for this month's Essex Beekeeper. I have never edited anything before. I feel very strongly that the continuity of information and news provided by the 'Beekeeper' is important, and rather than have a break in production I have donned the editor's hat for April. I would not wish to do both jobs on a regular basis -my marriage is still intact, but my sanity is a little frayed! By the time you read this we will have had our AGM so hopefully we have an Editor. Bless them, whoever it might be. Many thanks to contributors and researchers who met my deadline of one and a half days. Especial thanks to my husband for helping me to put all the copy onto disk for the DTP company. Many thanks to David Start for allowing me to twist his arm to produce the 'Beekeeper' for the last three months, during what has been such a

busy time for him. He, along with other Editors, must feel so despondent when it is then not circulated. I totally endorse David's comments in his Editorial last month -it is the Mailing Secretaries duty to distribute the magazine as promptly as possible, and not doing so for four months is inexcusable. I too have wondered not infrequently, how Divisional representatives can be so certain of the views of the whole of that division. After all, it only needs one vote to tip the balance on any issue. However, have any divisions objected when a decision has been made on their behalf without consultation?

Jean Smye County Secretary

PETER DALBY—PEBADALE APIARIES

Agent for EH Thorne and Northern Bee Books

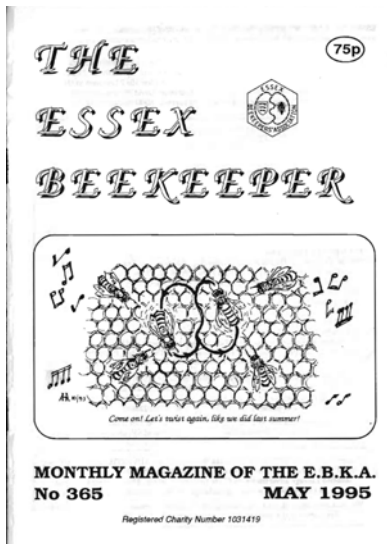
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Editorial from Essex Beekeeper May 1995

Hello! to you all from your new editor. This is my first attempt at editing a magazine, and I hope you like the result I am greatly indebted to my husband, Tony, for his patience (something neither of us has in abundance usually) in getting me up to speed with the DTP software, and I'm sure I shall flounder at times for several issues of The Beekeeper yet. However, I am looking forward to the challenge of the job and of course to the wonderful copy you are all going to send me. This can take the form of letters, articles (serious or less so), cuttings, amusing anecdotes, tips, recipes, photographs (black and white please), drawings, cartoons -anything in fact In particular I ask Divisional Secretaries to make sure I have the dates of your meetings and other events,

as well as anything of interest from your own Division. Clive de Bruyn has already offered several ideas for the magazine, which I shall certainly try out Your cooperation will be needed for these all will become clear in later issues.

So what's on the menu in this May edition? The regulars are here -Clive de Bruyn and Margaret Thomas -with their good and timely advice. There is a report on the recent EBKA Annual General Meeting, including a rather serious CBI Report. Geoff Mills has put out the call for contributions to ensure the success of this year's Essex Show which takes place next month. I had no idea that so much is involved and that so many people are needed! I'm sure this is true for other people too. The CBI's plans for new courses are published and you will gather from the CBI Report how important it is that these are successful.

There it is then -if you like it, send me material so that I can keep it up. If you don't like it, then send me the material you would like to see. Either way there is something for you to do. Good cropping!

Pat Allen Editor

Honey Buckets

**Mr Beesy has 30lb buckets @ £1.30 each
For collection from Chelmsford CM1 2JG**

11 St James Park Call: Richard Alabone 01245 259 288

National Honey Show Results

Jim McNeill

It would be nice to see a few more entries from Essex as it's so near and our honey is so good. There were only 12 members who entered out of 500+ members which is a very small percentage. I hope many of you went to see the show and attended some of the lectures and workshops. If you didn't attend the Show this year you have definitely missed out on a very informative day. The awards for the Essex Beekeeper members were as follows:

Paul Abbott, Southend, 2nd in class 133, 3rd in class 128.

Michael Bark, Harlow, 1st in class 189, 2nd in class 182, VHC in class 183.

Ann Cushion, Southend, 1st in class 184, 2nd in class 73, VHC in class 185.

Antony Edwards, Chelmsford, 2nd in classes 185 - 191, VHC in class 186.

Eric Fenner, Chelmsford, 2nd in classes 186 – 194, 3rd in classes 183 - 189 VHC in classes 181 - 182.

Penny Learmonth, Saffron Walden, VHC in class 190.

Jim McNeill, Romford, 1st in classes 102 - 185 - 186 - 194
2nd in classes 4 - 181 - 183 - 189 – 241, 3rd in class 242, VHC in class 192.

T & K Parrish 1st in class 30, 3rd in classes 39 – 40, HC in class 3.

Romford Division 1st in classes 182 – 183.

Michael Ruggins 2nd in class 184.

Brian Spencer, Chelmsford, 4th in class 12, VHC in class 102.

Terry Watson, Romford, 2nd in class 193 3rd in class 182, C in class 241.





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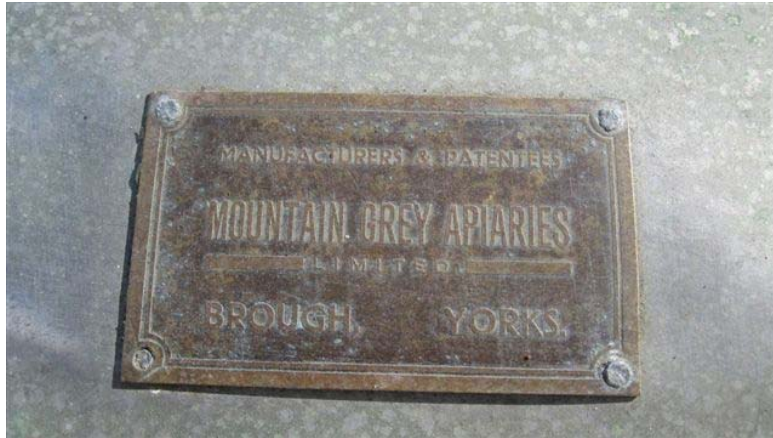
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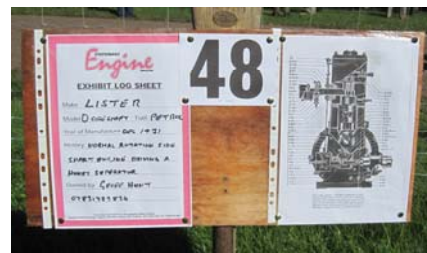
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Further views of the Honey
Extractor



Engine Model: Lister O Side Shaft
Manufactured: Dec 1931