

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



"Gathering Beeswax from outdoor foundation":
Worker Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*): Chewing & harvesting beeswax from a fresh sheet of foundation recently inserted into a frame, and left on a garden table: Note the chewed off wax stored in pollen baskets, prior to return to the hive. Photo Paul Abbott

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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.

January 2012 and February 2012

- 5 Jan. Thursday 7.30pm **Harlow** at Kings Church Red Willow. Divisional AGM and winter inspection with David Tyler.
- 11 Jan. Wednesday 7.30pm **Braintree** Microscopy Meetings at Tabor Science College, Panfield Lane, Braintree CM7 5XP. If you need any additional information contact Stuart Mitson on 01376340683.
- 13 Jan. Friday 8.00pm **Romford** Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL. Divisional AGM
- 19 Jan. Thursday 7.30pm **Epping Forest** at Chingford Horticultural Hall Larkshall Rd, London E4 6NH. Epping Forest Beekeepers' Association Annual General Meeting.
- 19 Jan. Thursday 7.30pm **Colchester** at Langham Community Centre CO4 5PB . A talk by Norman Carreck BSc CBiol FSB FRES NDB on the subject of recent research.
- 25 Jan. Wednesday 7.30pm **Southend** at Women's Institute Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh. Divisional AGM followed by a talk with slides by Martin Davis on building and operating a Warre Hive.
- 26 Jan. Thursday 7.30pm **Colchester** at Langham Community Centre CO4 5PB . Divisional AGM
- 27 Jan. Friday 8.00pm **Braintree** at the Constitutional Club CM7 1TY. Divisional AGM.
- 3 Feb. Friday 7.15pm **Saffron Walden** at Thaxted Guildhall CM6 2LA Divisional AGM followed by a Curry Night at the India Villa.
- 3 Feb. Friday 8.00pm **Romford** Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL. A talk by Penny Crowder on 'Natural Beekeeping'.
- 3 Feb. Friday 7.15pm **Saffron Walden** at Dunmow Day Centre, Gt Dunmow, CM6 1AE. Annual dinner and Divisional AGM.
- 15 Feb. Wednesday 7.30pm **Braintree** Microscopy Meetings at Tabor Science College, Panfield Lane, Braintree CM7 5XP. If you need any additional information contact Stuart Mitson on 01376340683.
- 16 Feb. Thursday 7.30pm **Epping Forest** at Chingford Horticultural Hall Larkshall Rd, London E4 6NH. Film night (TBA).
- 22 Feb. Wednesday 7.30pm **Southend** at Women's Institute Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh. Geoff Mills will be giving a talk on pollen patties and spring feeding.
- 23 Feb. Thursday 7.30pm **Colchester** at Langham Community Centre CO4 5PB . An introduction to making honeybee bait hives and solitary bee homes— a talk by Alan Hayden-Case. Derek will also outline Colchester Division's mentoring programme for new beekeepers.
- 25 Feb. Saturday 8.00pm **Braintree** at the Constitutional Club CM7 1TY. Annual Dinner.
- 29 Feb. Wednesday 8.00pm **Saffron Walden** at Foakes Hall, Great Dunmow CM6 1AE. A talk by Jean Smye on 'Candle Making.'

**County Pheromones
Richard Ridler (Chairman)**

January is the month for the BBKA annual delegates' meeting. This is the opportunity for all member associations to make their views known to BBKA, to approve accounts, to elect representatives to the BBKA's executive committee and to elect a president and members of the examinations board. Some associations choose to put motions forward to the BBKA which if adopted the BBKA is mandated to follow. This time Essex has no motions but your trustees have discussed the motions of other associations so that our representative is appropriately informed. The meeting takes much of the day and is held near the BBKA's headquarters in Warwickshire. EBKA's representative is Penny Learmonth from Saffron Walden Division. If you have views about the BBKA you would like aired or just want to know more about what goes on at the annual delegates meeting then do contact Penny. What the BBKA gets up to and how it goes about it matters to us particularly given that about half our annual subscription goes to funding the BBKA.

Braintree Beekeepers Beginners Course

We are running a course for beginners course on the following dates and all are on a Tuesday:

7th February,	14th February	21st February	28th February
6th March	13th March	20th March	

The course will be run from - The Henry Dixon Hall, Rivenhall End, Witham CM8 3HR at a cost of £30.

If you are interested please contact - Colleen Chamberlain on 01279 876 333 or colleenschambo@btinternet.com

Colchester Division subscriptions

Lydia Geddes has included membership forms in this issue, January 2012. Please complete and return swiftly with your fee. The subscriptions are due on 1 January 2012!

The Bee Inspector and the Pathogen Results Howard Gilbert

In the March and October 2011 issue of Essex Beekeeper I explained that I had been chosen to take part in the Random Apiary Survey (RAS). All the results are now available from my Bee Base web page. The pests or pathogens tested for were: Kashmir bee virus (KBV), Black queen cell virus (BQCV), Chronic bee paralysis (CPV), Slow paralysis virus (SPV), Deformed wing virus (DWV), Sac brood virus (SBV), Acute bee paralysis (APV), Israeli acute paralysis virus (IAPV). Nosema apis, Nosema ceranae and Acarine were only tested for on adult bees. The pathogen results were all negative on the bees taken from my colony. Good news, but they must spend all day cleaning themselves as they have forgotten to provide me with any honey!

Also below are the latest details of European Foulbrood in Essex and adjoining areas in 2011.

County	10sq.k found and area name	No of positive EFB cases including recurrences	Month
Essex	TL40 EPPING	5	August
Essex	TL40 EPPING	2	June
Essex	TL81 WITHAM	2	August
Essex	TL91 BIRCH GREEN	1	August
Essex	TM02 EAST COLCHESTER	2	June
Suffolk	TL93 NAYLAND	1	July
Suffolk	TL93 NAYLAND	1	September
Suffolk	TL93 NAYLAND	1	August
Suffolk	TM03 DEDHAM	1	June
Suffolk	TM03 DEDHAM	1	September
Suffolk	TM23 HARWICH	1	June
Suffolk	TM23 HARWICH	1	September
Suffolk	TM23 HARWICH	10	July
Suffolk	TM23 HARWICH	1	August

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/BeeDiseases/efbReport.cfm>

**National Bee Unit Eastern Region Associations
Autumn 2011
Keith Morgan (Regional Bee Inspector)**

Inspection Work:

The following Inspections have been carried out in Eastern Region for the Bee-keeping Season 2011.

Activity	2010	2011
Apiaries Inspected	1653	1596
Colonies Inspected	7658	7883
Beekeepers Visited	1059	988

Current known Beekeepers within Region: 4441– (673 New Beekeepers have been identified in Eastern Region since spring 2011, 361 self-registered) Further surveys of Beekeepers will take place this autumn to continue the updating of regional records, which was commenced in 2005 and is now on-going each winter.

Foulbrood

Incidences of European Foulbrood for the 2011 season are up again on the 2010 season and have been found in apiaries away from our usual problem spots.

Disease	Colonies 2010	Colonies 2011
European Foulbrood	96	152
American Foulbrood	6	3

We have also this year had to deal with nucleus suppliers, nationally, that it has transpired have on occasion supplied stocks which on inspection have been found with Foul Brood. This has involved the tracing of some 800 beekeepers / 1000 Nucleus Colonies across all Regions – work which will continue next Season. The real worry is that these colonies go to beginners, then, in some cases are lost in the winter, becoming a source of disease in areas previously not at risk. On this note I will ask all beginners who lose any colonies this winter to seal them up and if they suspect disease or have bought the bees from a nuc supplier and not sourced them locally to contact myself or in season your local inspector.

2011 County Totals for Notifiable Disease:

County	EFB Colonies	EFB Apiaries	AFB Colonies	AFB Apiaries
Norfolk	76	29	0	0
Suffolk	35	15	0	0
Herts	0	0	0	0
Cambs	1	1	0	0
Essex	12	6	0	0
Beds	0	0	0	0
Lincs	28	13	0	0
Leics		1	3	1
Rutland	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	152	65	3	1

Exotic Pest Surveillance:

Eastern Region has a higher risk status than most with its concentration of Ports and Military Bases, linked to other risks such as Imported Wax Refiners and Wholesale Fruit Merchants.

No Exotic Pests have been found and further surveillance work and liaison with Risk Premises will continue next season. Inspections carried out were 110 (2009), 164 (2010), 161 (2011).

Samples of floor debris were also collected from various Apiaries around the Region for analysis at the National Bee Unit for Exotic Pests – all were negative.

Import Inspections:

Import Inspections of full colonies and also Queens from within the EU have been carried out this year. These constitute either full colony inspections, or inspection of Import Health Certificates which accompany the bees. Within Eastern Region this constituted 11 Import Inspections of which most have been completed, with some paper checks being completed at the moment. It was on one

of these import inspections we found EFB in a nuc supplier.

Random Apiary Survey:

RAS inspections in the region from 1st June 2009 to present time are 739 apiaries and 4480 apiaries country wide. Some results from Year One are already shown on Beebase and for Year 2 will start coming in this autumn and will also be available to be accessed on Bee Base.

Colony Losses:

Regionally greater emphasis has been placed upon recording cases of loss since 2005 – which is one of the reasons why the numbers are seen to rise in some Counties.

During the first three months of the year most reported losses were visited and inspected within this region, with dead colonies being inspected, and samples being taken from some.

One overriding theme was losses due to Varroa as a result of incorrect timing of treatments or use of products to which varroa are resistant with the related virus build-ups, and also the incidence of Nosema Ceranae.

The combination of varroa related viruses and Nosema Ceranae is still not fully understood – what is apparent from site visits we have made is that it is certainly a silent killer and again brings home the need for more regular control of varroa rather than the one hit per year approach, and also the need to examine stocks (or a representative sample of them) for Nosema. Current guidance is to only treat for Nosema if it is known to be present, rather than blanket treatment with Fumigillin products.

I would ask all beekeepers and bee farmers to please report any losses of any colony even if the cause is known to me on the telephone number or e-mail address shown below, only by building up this sort of baseline data can we have the information to hand for future questions which may be asked about the losses of our colonies. Please remember that the information you provide is confidential.

Eastern Regional Bee Inspector Keith Morgan:

01485 520838 – keith.morgan@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Mobile: 07919 004215

Letters to the Editor

From Roger Barker,

Dear Sirs,

I am writing regarding the increase to the subscription for associate members. Associate membership is usually a device by which partners of beekeepers are allowed to attend functions to support their respective beekeeper partners, or retired beekeepers to retain some contact with active members. I am a retired

chemist with health issues, and would not be able to take part in association activities without my wife being with me. Associate members personally do not gain by being a member, but do contribute significantly to the association. I know of two associate members who organise events for the beekeepers at cost to themselves, both in time and financially, but do, through these events contribute to funds.

A rise of £5 is not a very large sum of money, but it is a 100% increase and with other organisations just adding £5 per year it is just another drain on a pensioners resources. From the list of proposed price rises, it looks as if the associate members have been targeted and penalised.

From Anthony Edwards

Dear Editor

The article last month by Penny Learmonth/Geoff Mills was a fascinating insight to the outstanding contribution some members have, over the past half century, made to our Association and which as a consequence is recognised with the conferral of County Life Membership. The benefit was for all of the county's members and as such their BBKA, EBKA and Divisional membership fees for the past 50 years has been borne out of central EBKA funds. However from next year the CEC has determined that CLM fees should be borne by the members Division which is totally contrary to the spirit of the appointment. With only a handful of County Life Members this was an unnecessary and mean change of arrangements. Was this change necessary and taken by Trustees with consultation and support of their members? The general membership should be given the opportunity to express their views at the next years AGM.

From Geoff Mills County Life Member

Dear Editor,

Recently, I had drawn to my attention that CEC had decided to move the membership costs of CLM members from central EBKA funds to Divisions that had members who had CLM status. I sent emails to the officers of the CEC asking for this decision to be reconsidered. My reason for this is that I believe the present arrangement is the right one since it is the County Executive Committee (CEC) that proposes County Life Memberships. Historically the proposal is then voted on at the following AGM by the members present. In other words, the CEC proposes and the County pays the annual membership fee and I have no argument against that. The existing arrangement for Divisional Life Members (DLM) is that the Division proposes and if carried by voting Divisional members the annual cost is borne by the Division; and I have no argument to change that. My proposition is directly related to the appointment of future CLMs and

DVMs and asks that at the forthcoming AGM "That the award of CL Membership and DL Membership does not automatically waive their normal membership fee". My reasoning for this change is that I believe that future committees are not committed to expenditure determined many years previously by others. Best wishes and a Happy New Year.

National Honey Show Report Jim McNeill

This year we had 12 members exhibiting, a slight increase on last year but still could be much better. The prize money they shared was in excess of £200.

The list of Essex winners are:

Paul Abbott, Southend, obtained 1-1st, 1 -2nd, 2 -3rd, 2 - VHC, 3 - HC.

Pat Allen, Romford, obtained 3 - 2nd, 3 - 3rd, 1 - VHC, 1 HC.

Michael Barke, Harlow, 1 - 1st, 1 - 3rd.

Anthony Edwards, Chelmsford, 2 - 3rd, 1 - C.

Eric Fenner, Harlow, 3 - 1st, 1 - 2nd, 1 - 3rd, 2 - VHC.

Marlene Harris, Southend, The Dodd Cup, 3 -1st, 3 - 2nd, 1 - VHC.

Sarah Jenkins, Saffron Walden, 1 - VHC, 2 - HC, 1 - C.

Penny Learmonth, Saffron Walden, 1 - HC.

Mr. T & Mrs K Parrish, Saffron Walden, Hender Cup, 2 - 1st, 1 - 3rd, 1 - 4th, 1 - C.

Jim McNeill, Romford, 6 - 1st, 4 - 2nd, 1 - HC.

Terence Watson, Romford, 1 - C.

Romford Division won the Tremearn Cup, 1 - 1st, 1 - 2nd, 1 - 3rd.



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A Scottish Beekeeper in France part III by Kevin Cowle

This article first appeared in the Scottish Beekeeper. It is reprinted here courtesy of the Editor, Nigel Southworth and with the co-operation of EBees.

Two significant events have occurred since my last account of beekeeping in the south of France. We have moved house and I lost my bees. These were not unconnected. After an eventful first summer's beekeeping over here marked in particular by a huge snowstorm in May I bedded my bees down for the winter in September with plenty of food and, so I thought, plenty of bees. However in early November we moved house and the following few months were filled with the comings and goings of a succession of builders, plumbers, joiners and electricians. Inevitably the bees took second stage and to my dismay in March I discovered that both colonies were dead. Although it was a relatively mild winter there simply weren't enough bees in each hive to keep warm and survive. They had never properly recovered from that freak snowstorm. Time to start again.

Keeping an eye on the weekly free newspaper, which unlike Britain has a standard 'Apiculture' column, I tracked down a professional beekeeper/bee breeder about thirty miles away who could sell me a couple of nuclei for about £80 each. A good price, especially as I could choose which strains of this year's artificially inseminated queens I would like. But there was a catch. He sold the bees on five frames and I had to provide the boxes, which I didn't have. To complicate things further, I now run Dadant hives and the nuclei were on Langstroth frames. For those of you in the know, Dadant frames are much deeper and shorter than Langstroths. As with Smith and National hives in Scotland, the frames simply aren't interchangeable.



So after making not a few mistakes I built a couple of bee-proof, ventilated travelling nuke boxes and in the process came to appreciate the accuracy with which people like Thornes construct their hives. I learnt that when building any parts to do with a hive there is only about 3mm tolerance on any measurement. I duly collected the bees from an immensely impressive breeding station with about a hundred nucleus hives, close to the owner's equally impressive warehouse-cum-extracting and bottling plant. It was literally the size of a small B & Q. He runs six hundred hives and in summer and autumn has eight full time staff.

The bees home, the next job was to devise a way of getting the bees off the Langstroth frames and into my Dadant hives. I could have simply shaken the bees with the queens into the new brood chamber, but this would have sacrificed

all the brood, of which there was a lot. Instead I set about building two full sized Langstroth brood boxes with floors adapted to the dimensions of the Dadant brood box beneath them. By stacking one above the other with a queen excluder between the two it was then possible for the workers to occupy both parts of the hive. After a week I found and marked to queens and moved them into the Dadant brood box below. Three weeks later, after all the brood in the top box had hatched, I removed it and the colonies were successfully transferred into their final home. This method works well as I know from experience, having had to transfer from Smiths to Standards when I kept bees in Lanarkshire.

I am delighted with my new bees. They are very docile, fly at low temperatures, don't build too much brace comb or glue propolis everywhere and as I write in early August the queens are still in full lay. One is Carniolan, the other Caucasian, though apart from colour (the latter is lighter with a hint of Italian) I cannot detect much difference so far. Fortunately for the queens there is an immense flow of pollen at the moment, from the Himalayan Balsam which in France has invaded thousands of acres and is treated as an environmental threat like Japanese Knotweed. Luckily here in the lower valleys of the Pyrenees the authorities are doing little to curb this superb provider of pollen and delicious nectar (though it will not be allowed a foothold in my garden!). At the new house we have several acres of woodland and meadow, so the bees are discretely tucked away on a little knoll that catches the early morning sun and is well protected from marauding badgers and wild boar. The local newspapers regularly carry stories of the damage done to beehives by the boars and also the brown bears coming into the valleys in winter. So my hives stand behind sheep netting and an electric fence!

It now remains to be seen how these bees will fare over the winter. There will certainly be plenty of young bees in the hives and I will not be taking any honey off. This despite the fact that I am told a great crop can be taken from the ivy in October. There is no sign at all of varroa in either colony, though I am a bit concerned about the ants who are nesting on the varroa tray. But the big difference will be that this winter I can check my bees every day if necessary and learn from last winter's mistake. I don't need reminding that even after forty year's keeping bees, you never stop learning more about them.

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**Statement from BBKA:
Update 2 on ECJ ruling on honey containing pollen from a genetically Modified
Organism**

The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health met on Monday 24 October and continued the discussion on the status of pollen in honey. This statement provides a summary of the discussion.

The Commission held meetings at the end of September with representatives from honey exporting countries and with EU stakeholders. At the meeting on 24 October, they confirmed that the implications of the ECJ ruling are clear in that: pollen is regarded as both a component of honey and an ingredient as defined in food labelling legislation. Honey should therefore be labelled with a list of ingredients ('honey, pollen'). If some or all of the pollen is from a GM source, it should be labelled accordingly unless it is exempt under the 0.9% threshold for the adventitious presence of authorised GM materials. This proportion is calculated in relation to the total pollen content of the product.

The Commission's Joint Research Centre is evaluating methods for extracting pollen DNA from honey and will advise further at the next meeting of the Committee, which is scheduled for mid-November. Some initial results from samples taken by Member States have confirmed earlier findings of GM rapeseed DNA in imported "canola" honey but have also found traces of GM soya DNA in some products. It is not clear whether the soya DNA is derived from pollen or some other contaminant.

EFSA has been asked to advise on the safety of pollen from GM maize MON810. The full statement is due to be published shortly but their basic conclusion is along the lines that MON810 pollen is as safe as pollen from other types of maize. By itself, this opinion does not change anything and the existing approval for food use of MON810 cannot be extended to pollen until the company (Monsanto) makes a formal request.

Like MON810, two GM varieties of oilseed rape (GT73 and MS8/Rf3) are currently approved for food use but the terms of the authorisation do not include pollen. Applications for wider authorisation were submitted in 2010 and these are being evaluated by EFSA.

The Commission has asked for further information before determining what further action is needed, for example to amend and clarify the original intention of the legislation that led the ECJ to its unexpected conclusion. Such action is likely to be lengthy and resource-intensive, and both the FSA, and the Commission need to understand the practical implications of the ruling before deciding what can reasonably be done to remedy the situation.

The FSA will continue to work with Defra on the issues arising from the ECJ opinion and the next steps, in terms of implementing the ruling and finding a long-term solution. The next meeting of the Standing Committee is scheduled for later this month.

BBKA Exams 2012
Jane Ridler (Exam Secretary)

Happy New Year! Have you made a resolution to study for bee exams? BBKA have decided to offer two dates for the Module exams this year, but beware - only Module 1 can be taken at either date. The exams are as follows:

Date	Exams Offered
Saturday 24 th March	Module 1 - Honeybee Management; Module 2 - Honeybee Products and Forage; Module 5 - Honeybee Biology; Module 7 - Selection and Breeding of Honeybees
Saturday 10 th November	Module 1 - Honeybee Management; Module 3 - Honeybee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning; Module 6 - Honeybee Behaviour; Module 8 - Honeybee Management and History

The closing date for entries for the March Modules is **10th February**, the General Husbandry is **28th February** and the November Modules is **30th September**. These entry forms should be sent to me please, not to BBKA HQ, as they only deal with EBKA through me. Please download the entry form from the BBKA website or get a form from your Divisional Rep and send with appropriate cheque (to BBKA) to Rundle House, High St, Hatfield Broad Oak, CM22 7HE. Please note that I'm away for most of January so won't send an email acknowledgement until I return. As I receive forms I will circulate lists of candidates local to each other for mutual support purposes! Good Luck.

Basic Assessment forms can come in through the season and testing won't start till May. Many find the small early season colonies easier to manage under test than the late summer honey-protecting variety, so you may like to send your form off sooner rather than later.

Jane Ridler, Essex Exam Secretary (jane.ridler@uwclub.net)

Transport to the Spring Convention

Braintree Beekeepers have booked a luxury coach to take us to the Spring Convention on Saturday 21st April 2012 at The Harper Adams College Campus in Shrophire. The cost will be approximately £20 (excluding entrance fee). If anyone is interested in a place on the coach please could you contact Stuart Mitson on 01376 340683.



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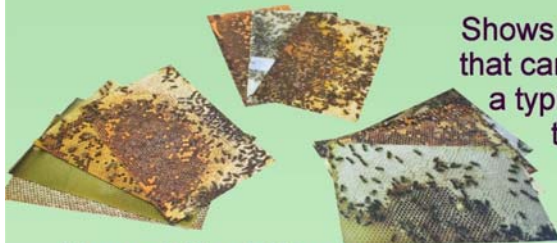
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The Gilbert Louvre

The Gilbert Louvre is a type of entrance block for hives. It was designed by Les Gilbert, who passed away earlier this year. Many years ago the Gilbert Louvre went into commercial production and was sold by Taylor's of Welling. Below are three views of the Louvre. *Photos by Geoff Mills.*

1



1. This is a view of the Gilbert Louvre entrance block fully opened, which is achieved by swivelling it on its end bearings. This allows bees to enter the hive as if the normal entrance block had been completely removed.

2



2. The sliding part of the entrance block is covering 5 holes so that five bees may enter at the same time if it is rotated 90°. The end bearings are fitted into two pieces of hardwood which slide, about 48mm, into the sides of the hive floor as would a normal simple entrance block..

3



3. With nine holes open.