



EBKA – Colchester Division

March 2022 Members newsletter

It will soon be time ...

It may not have felt much like beekeeping weather during our recent storms, but before we know it our bees will be ready for our first inspection (I can almost hear them moaning about me) but are we ready!? I took delivery of some new brood and super frames and foundation a couple of months ago (purchased whilst in the sales) and put the box in the house, rather than my shed, to keep the foundation from going hard and brittle. Before I know it, I will need to start to think about putting them all together. I cleaned up and scorched my spare boxes at the end of last season, cleaned my hive tools, gave my bee suit a good soaking (which made very little difference in getting rid of the many propolis stains), and cleaned out my shed. Somehow though I know I will not be prepared for my first set of queen cells, and I still haven't finished pruning the apple trees or cut the hedges around my apiary. However, it's no different to any other year and yet somehow it all seems to come together, and it's amazing how quickly a few frames can be made up if I need them in a hurry. March is an exciting time of year, and usually very optimistic. With the wider world in mind, that optimism may feel a little out of place, but we all need something to focus our minds and distract us from everyday happenings, whatever that may be, and there is not much else I can think of that focuses our minds quite so completely as inspecting honeybee colonies. With the start of the beekeeping season also comes the start of sowing seeds and planning what I can grow to benefit both my bees and my family. It really is one of my favourite times of the year. There are a number of pollen opportunities for our bees; the snowdrops are now turning (which is a good time to divide them if needed), but crocuses are starting to

come into flower, lots of hazelnut catkins can be seen, and blackthorn and cherry blossom, followed shortly by willow. After all the storms, and then quite a bit of rain, I felt I needed to check my hives to see if their fondant needed topping up (obviously the bees can't fly in that sort of weather and so will be using up their stores if they still have any or will be 'munching' away on fondant). If you are needing to still provide fondant now is a good time to put on fondant with added pollen to top up what's naturally growing, available from beekeeping suppliers. Only a few consistent warmish days and the queens will be encouraged to start laying, meaning pollen will be needed to feed the growing larvae.

On the subject of frames and foundation particularly, I



decided last weekend to check all my boxes for wax moth. I stack all my spare brood boxes and all my supers, after carefully going through them all for any obvious evidence

of moths, in my shed over the winters. I tape up any gaps and put a roof on each stack. I then also check a few times throughout the winter just in case. However, when I was in my shed, I noticed pieces of torn newspaper on the floor. On closer inspection I discovered that a mouse or mice had managed to find their way into the shed and made a rather cosy looking home in a cardboard box!

I managed to find how they got in and have since squirted expanding foam in the hole. Whenever I go into my shed my dog knows he is only allowed to sit outside as I regularly tell him the only creatures allowed in my bee/honey shed are me and a few stray bees. Not sure he would think much of mice taking up residence. Of course, any sign of mice in the same room you process your honey in needs to be quickly dealt with.



Cooking with honey – February’s meeting

Our club meeting last week focused on the many exciting ways we can all use honey in our everyday cooking (for those of us lucky enough to have last year’s honey still in our cupboards). Once again, we hired the large hall at Langham Community Centre and the room was quickly



filled with lots of lovely smells and hungry people. Barbara had brought along most of her kitchen and

demonstrated delicious dishes from salads with a honey dressing to honey glazed salmon, and a honey and mustard sausage and veg tray bake. Andy, our CEC Trustee, also cooked a slow cooked garlic chicken dish which he brought along to add to the feast. There was also marinated chicken, turmeric and honey roasted new potatoes, red cabbage, glazed carrots, and a selection of honey cakes. Everyone soon tucked in and there was very little food left by the end of the evening. All recipes cooked on the evening will be included in the newsletter over the next few months; see below for the first three.



Basic assessment

Barbara has set up a Basic Assessment study group for those members wishing to learn, revise and undertake their Basic Assessment certificate. The group will meet up to run through the assessment syllabus and is intended as a revision/discussion group rather than classroom style sessions. Last year two of our members, Matt Payne and Will Verrier, received a distinction – which also meant they were both awarded the Miss Avey award and £50 prize.

There is still time to join this year’s group and so please get in touch with Barbara if you are interested, by email:

bsharp302005@tiscali.co.uk. You should have at least a full year's experience and the assessment covers both theory and practical elements.



BOOK NOW!



Spring 2022 Convention

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 April 2022
Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Lectures, Workshops and Seminars covering a wide range of practical and scientific topics, directed at all levels of experience, presented by leading experts. Bumper Trade Show Saturday 9th

Speakers and Tutors include; Marin Anastasov, Mark Barnett, Shirley and Richard Bond, Norman Carreck, Lars Chittka, Celia Davis, Joyce Nisbet, Juliet Osborne, Julian Parker, Sara Robb, Nigel Semmence, Jo Widdicombe, Geraldine Wright, and more...

For further information, **and to book** from 31st January
see the Spring Convention pages at www.bbka.org.uk



Spring membership now closed

Every division of the British Beekeepers' Association follows the same set of rules. These include our two entry membership periods, spring and autumn, known as our Spring and Autumn Capitation Returns. As stated in last month's newsletter, if you had not renewed your membership to Colchester Beekeepers' by the 15th February then your membership would be lapsed. If you are one of those people then you can still renew your membership in the usual manner, and all it means is that there may be a slight delay in processing your application and sending out your receipt as the system closes the spring return and opens the autumn return. You would be

in the autumn return (I realise that sounds very odd in March) meaning there is a delay in being able to make a BDI claim if needed. You will still receive all usual communications from us, and other membership benefits such as the monthly magazines from BBKA and EBKA.

Thank you again to all members that paid so promptly this year. The Spring return had 122 members recorded on it!



A very warm welcome to our new members for 2022

Morag has had a busy start to her Bee club duties with 25 keen new beekeepers attending her Beginners Beekeeping Theory class, being held at Langham Community Centre on Thursday evenings. She does not run classes on our club evening and instead her students are invited to attend our meetings, so please look out for them. We are very pleased to see that several of these beginners have decided to join the club.

There are also a few other new members, so . . . a very warm welcome to:

Louise Cook

Sarah Gough

Thomas and Anderley Hampson

Mark and Supamon Lockett

Samantha and Harry Mercer

Robert Rice

Vanessa Tester

Katherine Venables

Andre Zigani



Honey, apple, and walnut tea bread

INGREDIENTS 2 medium apples, 50g walnuts chopped, 100g soft brown sugar, 100g margarine, 100g raisins, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon honey, 150g self-raising flour, 50g wholemeal flour, 1 teaspoon mixed spice.

METHOD Place all the ingredients in a large bowl or mixer and beat well until everything is well blended. Spoon the mixture into a greased 1kg loaf tin. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180C or gas mark 4 for 1 ¼ hours. Check it's cooked when a knife comes out clean. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool. Serve sliced with butter.

Slow-cooked garlic chicken

INGREDIENTS 2 tablespoons honey, 2 tablespoons tomato puree, 2 tablespoons dark soy sauce, 1 tablespoon cider vinegar, 2 tablespoons water, 6 spring onions trimmed and finely sliced, 6 cloves garlic crushed, 4 chicken breasts, 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, and a handful of coriander to garnish.

METHOD In a small bowl, mix together the honey, tomato puree, soy sauce, cider vinegar and measured water. Stir in the spring onions and crushed garlic. Pop the chicken breasts into the slow-cooker bowl, and cover with the sauce. Put the lid on. Cook on high for 2-3 hours, or on low for 4-5 hours, stirring half way through. The chicken should now pull apart easily, and you can shred it into the sauce using 2 forks. To serve, dry fry the sesame seeds for a couple of minutes to give them a bit of colour and a toasty flavour, and sprinkle over the top of the chicken. Scatter with the coriander leaves.

Glazed carrots

INGREDIENTS 750g chantenay carrots, olive oil, sea salt, ground black pepper, juice of half a lemon, 3 tablespoons honey, chopped parsley to garnish.

METHOD Wash and top the carrots and place in a baking tray. Drizzle a good amount of oil, season with the salt and pepper, and pour on the lemon juice. Mix well and roast in

a pre-heated oven at 180C for 25-30 minutes. Take out of the oven and drizzle with the honey. Give the tray a shake to evenly coat the carrots or mix with a spoon. Roast for a further 8-10 minutes. Remove from the oven, place in a serving dish and sprinkle with the chopped parsley.



If you would like to comment or respond to anything mentioned in any of the newsletters, please get in touch. You can either send an email to Sarah at hazelsfarm2015@gmail.com or phone on 07867 640650 or post to Mrs Sarah Curtis, Hazels, Carringtons Road, Great Bromley, Colchester, CO7 7XA.

