



EBKA – Colchester Division

June 2022 Members newsletter

World Bee Day 20th May

Like most of you, I suspect, I spent the 20th May waiting for the rain to stop . . . and it didn't! However, I did receive a new brood box, roof, floor, and frames to put together.

Fellow member, Alison Morris, sent me this lovely photo of her grandchildren experiencing their first go at extracting honey.



Club meeting 26th May – Tips on entering the Tendring Show

On Thursday 26th May we held our monthly club meeting in the large hall at Langham Community Centre.

The evening was spent with Barbara discussing the Tendring Show entries and demonstrating candle making,

including using the club's two new candle moulds. We also discussed wax processing and cleaning, using a variety of methods from using slow cookers, to old saucepans to solar extractors.

Solar extractors are brilliant but unless you have the skills to make one, they are expensive to buy, not to mention needing space to store it. Slow cookers are good to use and relatively cheap to buy (often being able to pick one up at car boot sales etc), but if you don't have one and don't wish to buy one then an old saucepan works just as well. During the first Covid lock down I produced weekly videos which Morag then sent to everyone who had signed up to the beginners course. I did a video every week from April to Boxing Day and so covered out of season stuff as well like checking supers for wax moth, making up new equipment, and also processing my wax. We discussed lots of different ways to melt down and clean wax at the monthly meeting and all basically covered the same principle but just used slightly different techniques. Click on the link below to go to our website to view a video on how I process wax. Please note that I should have used rain water not tap water, and that at the end of the video I said I would throw away the muslin cloth I used as I couldn't think of what else to do with it. At the meeting a few members said that they use them as fire lighters, which of course is the perfect solution. The video also covers cleaning up some equipment in my usual haphazard way so please feel free to fast forward over that bit!

<http://colchesterbeekeepers.org.uk/sarahsbit.html>

Thank you to Andy for putting it on the website.

The club meeting also covered entering honey at the Tendring Show, ensuring the jar is completely full, the lid is completely clean, and the jar is clean and not sticky. We also talked about the Arts and Crafts section and Cookery. All entries can be found on the show schedule which was emailed out to everyone (along with a guidelines sheet) and can also be found on the club's website. Have a go at entering this year and don't hesitate to contact the committee if you wish to ask questions or have a query.



I think members gained a lot from the club meeting and of course, it's always good to meet up and chat over coffee and biscuits.

We plan for our next meeting in June to be at one of our teaching apiaries, weather depending.

More details to follow.



Swarm collection services

An email was sent out to all members with a pdf attachment listing our club's swarm collection services and also collecting bumble bee nests. Everyone was asked to post it on relevant social media platforms, and print and post up in public spaces. Thank you to those members who

contacted me to say they had sent it to their local Parish Councils and those who put it up in their local area.

Both Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council know to contact us.

Please email if you need the attachment resent.



And talking of swarming...

Me and my family don't get much holiday a year, with most years only managing to take 5 or 6 days off in total (the joy of running your own business) and so when we get a chance to go away for a weekend we grab it, and a free May bank holiday was even better! The weather had not been too great leading up to the weekend and so I was unable to inspect my bees. However, the Saturday morning was nice and so we quickly threw a few things into a bag and emptied the contents of the fridge into our giant cool box. I walked round to my bees and told them I was going away and so to behave themselves.

We had a lovely relaxing long weekend, but on Monday mid morning my brother sent me a video message of a swarm of bees! I knew I had equipment ready and a nuc box made up and so thought it would be a simple job to box them up when we got home later that day. However, it turned out that they must have swarmed the day before or Saturday (probably the second I turned my back) as the video my brother sent was not them swarming but them moving into the roof space of my shed. When I say shed, I really mean an old pig weaning shed with asbestos roof sections. Matt and Godfrey Payne very kindly came round and told me the best way to access them by cutting out the ceiling inside. I was up for the challenge and quite looking forward to my first cut out. However, the following weekend, after cutting out a section of the ceiling I couldn't work out how to physically cut out very delicate comb and get it attached to my frames without having 4 sets of hands. I am ashamed to say I completely failed and had to phone Matt again to come and help me but am very happy to say that the colony is thriving in my mother-in-law's back garden.

During a quick inspection to see which colony had swarmed I saw that I really needed to take off some supers of oil seed rape honey. I was pretty sure I knew where the swarm had come from and sure enough when I got to that hive there was a definite ‘do not disturb’ sign up on the door. So, I removed the supers of OSR honey and extracted the honey and left the swarmed colony alone. (It’s worth pointing out to our beginners that if you don’t have OSR but are taking off supers of honey, please remember that you may have a gap in June when there may not be much for your bees to forage and that it might be worth leaving some honey for them just in case. If you have OSR honey, you must remove it all before it sets in the comb and can’t be spun out).

The following evening after work I put the supers back on the hives they came from and realised straight away when I lifted the roof off the swarmed colony that there must be a cast swarm somewhere! Sure enough, I walked round the other side of the hedge to find a swarm hanging on a branch of one of my hazels (the swarm it came from is also called Hazel by the way). By the time I had got my equipment out I noticed that I was too late. There was more noise, more movement, and a sense of imminent take off! Despite my efforts at ‘selling’ this beautiful ten thousand bedrooled detached house (nuc) with views across farmland and a garden full of foraging potential they were off.

My husband told me later that our son calmly said, “there appears to be a mad old woman running across the field chasing a swarm of bees.” Needless to say, I watched them head straight for a hole in a tree and so no hope of getting them back. All because of the excitement and distraction of cut-outs and spinning honey – well that’s what I’m telling myself anyway!



Welcome to some new members

A very warm welcome to a few new members:

- Jonathan Williams
- Graham Burnett-Hall
- Rebecca Morcombe
- Keith Owden

- Kerry Bliss

We now have 150 members at Colchester Division!



Honey jars

Essex Beekeepers’ Association run a bulk honey jar order for members of all divisions. As explained in last month’s newsletter, I have volunteered for the orders to be delivered to me. They are set to arrive at my house in Great Bromley on Thursday 14th July and so should then be ready to collect that weekend. You should have already received your order form which explains prices and sizes available, although as Morag said please ignore the delivery and collection note at the bottom of the form. I will send out an email to confirm collection times. If you are unable to make the collection date, then alternative days can be arranged.

Please note that this scheme is organised by EBKA and so any order queries must go to the contact on the order form.



Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture

For those of you who read the newsletter early, there is just time to still get early bird tickets for the Ted Hooper Lecture but hurry at the deadline is 4th June. An email was sent to all on the 29th May with further details.



This is the last of our honey recipes demonstrated at our March club meeting.

Pineapple and honey cake

INGREDIENTS 100grams softened butter, 227gram tin pineapple chunks, 2 tsp baking powder, 115grams honey, zest of 1 orange, 2 large eggs, 200grams plain flour.

TOPPING INGREDIENTS 115grams honey, 50grams melted butter, 25grams desiccated coconut.

METHOD Pre-heat your oven to 180 degrees. Place the drained pineapple on double thickness kitchen roll to absorb any excess moisture and then finely chop. Sift the flour and baking powder together in a bowl and set aside. Beat the softened butter in a separate bowl until creamy, then gradually beat in the honey and orange zest. Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding a spoonful of flour with the 2nd egg. Fold in the flour and baking powder mix and then add the pineapple pieces. Mix all ingredients together. Spoon the mixture into a greased, lined 20cm cake tin and level the top. Mix the topping ingredients together and then spread evenly over the cake mixture. Bake for 30-35 minutes in a pre-heated oven or until a knife comes out clean. Remove from the oven and cool in the tin for 10 minutes before placing onto a cooling rack.

Honey spiced almond cupcakes

INGREDIENTS 140grams butter, 100grams honey, 100grams soft light brown sugar, 1tsp ground allspice, 2 eggs lightly beaten, 24 whole blanched almonds, 200grams self-raising flour.

METHOD Pre-heat your oven to 180 degrees and put cupcake cases into your cupcake tin. Place the butter, sugar, and honey in a saucepan and gently heat until all the butter is melted, and the sugar has dissolved. Remove the pan from the heat. Sift the flour and allspice together in a bowl. Add to the mixture in the saucepan. Beat in the eggs until smooth. Divide the mixture into the paper cases. Place an almond on top of each one and the bake in a pre-heated oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack before serving.

Honey fruit cake

INGREDIENTS 113grams honey, 113grams butter, 2 large eggs, 2tsp mixed spice, 170grams plain flour, 454grams mixed fruits such as cherries, cranberries, sultanas, raisins etc, 86grams caster sugar, 1 tsp baking soda, half a teaspoon lemon juice, a little milk.

METHOD Pre-heat your oven to 180 degrees. Beat together the honey, sugar, and butter until smooth and creamy. Sieve the flour, mixed spice, and baking powder into the mixture and fold in. Add the eggs and beat until the mixture is uniform and smooth. Fold in the mixed fruits, lemon juice and a dash of milk until it is soft and

light. Put the mixture in a greased lined 7inch cake tin. Level the top and bake in a pre-heated oven for 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes, until a knife comes out clean. (Place foil on top of the cake for the last 15 minutes if it starts to brown too quickly). Once cooked through take out of the oven and allow to cool for 15 minutes in the tin before turning out and onto a cooling rack.



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.



Our club's website is colchesterbeekeepers.org.uk.

To use the members area found on the Learn Zone and Loan Zone pages:

Username: CBKAMember

Password: BeeKeeper1

