

Jim demonstrating the process of 'Cappings to Candles'
at the February meeting.



Romford Division Contacts:

Secretary ~ Pat Allen

01708 220897 ~ pat.allen@btconnect.com

Chairman ~ Jim McNeill

01708 765898 ~ jimandliz44@aol.co.uk

Divisional Voting Member/Trustee ~ Pádraig Floyd

07894 419800 ~ psafloyd@yahoo.com



March 2015

Romford Division

EBKA Charity Number: 1031419

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meeting: Tuesday 10th March 7.30, Jim's Place,
Collier Row

April meeting: Friday 10th, 8pm
The Zest Hive - Varroa Free by Design
with Bill Summers

COURSES IN 2015:

Several courses or training sessions will be available this year, arranged by Pat Allen and listed below. **Please note** that all arrangements for these courses will be made by email. (pat.allen@btconnect.com)

Beginners Course:

There are still a couple of places available on the course, which will be held at Thames Chase, Upminster. The teaching hives are nicely settled in there now. Students will receive final information in the week before the course starts. Contact Pat Allen if you have any queries about the course.

Basic Assessment Preparation:

If there are enough members applying to take their Basic Assessment this year, then Pat will run a Preparation session for them. Please email Pat if you are interested.

'Improver' Sessions:

Dates have yet to be arranged but Pat will be holding the following sessions:

Swarm Control – April or early May

Making Increase – June

Honey Extraction – Late June

Integrated Pest Management – July

There has been a lot of interest in these but there is still room for a few more people. Email Pat if you are interested but have not put your name down yet, stating which session(s) you want to join.

*There may be a small charge to cover expenses for these sessions.

Website: www.ebka.org

CAPPINGS TO CANDLES – Jim McNeill

Jim brought a lot of equipment to show us all how we can make use of all the cappings collected from our hives, making good use of our wax.

The wax can either be melted in a Bain-Marie or in an urn. The honey which remains at the bottom of the cappings bucket must not be fed back to the bees as it will kill them. He showed us how to filter the wax through kitchen towel held together with an elastic band

Jim demonstrated the type of box that could be used as a solar extraction box which he had made with two layers of glass on top and insulated inside. A shelf is put in the solar extraction box which can be an aluminium baking tray; put a brick at one end so that the wax can run down.

He showed us his candle frame with nails attached, holding the candle wicks in place with bull dog clips so that he could pour the heated wax onto the candle wicks very gradually; taking care for it to set before pouring the next lot of wax onto the wick – a very slow process at first but speeds up as the candles grow and it is a good idea to do several candles at the same time.

Jim gave us lots of tips when making candles, and also told us that this month we should get rid of all the old combs and wash frames by adding two handfuls of washing soda in the urn and heat for 10 minutes then turn over and heat for another 10 minutes

Jim warned to be careful if you put the melted wax in an ice cream tub as they are likely to bend under the heat. Also bees wax and paraffin wax burn differently and when buying wicks you must specify that you want it for bees wax and that you need different size wick depending on the size of candle you want to make.

Pat advised to make sure the solar extractor is big enough to fit a queen excluder.

JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL

Beekeeping notes for March ~ written by Pat Allen

I don't believe that we've had a winter this year, and it's spring already! March should be bringing us some warmer weather and we may get the chance to look at the bees. My bees have been flying a lot all through the winter months but I am confident they had plenty of stores, so they should be fine. There has been fresh pollen going in which is a good sign, it means the queen is laying.

Do take a peek if the weather is warm enough, and calm, but make sure it is over 12°C and be very quick. You **must remove mouseguards** as soon as possible because they tend to knock much-needed pollen off the bees' legs. Woodpecker guards can come off too. If the bees need food, give some fondant, but remember that March is the hardest month for them, with old bees dying or struggling to produce new bees to take over, so do not open them for long.

If the weather is really warm near the end of the month, and you wintered with a super under brood box, then take the opportunity to swap the boxes back and put a queen excluder over the brood box – but do make sure the queen is in the brood box! If a colony is strong, then it can be given another super over the crownboard, which will give a bit more space if they need it.

Reminder EBKA AGM

The 135th Annual General Meeting of the Essex Beekeepers' Association will be held on **Saturday 14 March 2015 at 2pm** in Room E06, Writtle College, Lordship Lane, Chelmsford. CM1 3RP.

Following the AGM, the Keynote Speech will be given by Andrew Beer, the current chairman of North Bucks Beekeepers' Association. Andrew's talk will be on "Bees & the Law".

