

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### The EBKA 2016 AGM

This year's AGM will be held at 2pm on Saturday 19 March in Room EO6 at Writtle College, Lordship Road, Chelmsford, CM1 3RP. You are cordially invited to attend this event at which Jim McNeill will be installed as the EBKA Presiding Officer for the year 2016/17 and where members of the Romford Division will be providing refreshments after the meeting. Following the AGM, the Keynote Speech - **"Build the Buzz"** will be given by Nigel Housden, Press & Media Relations, BBKA.

*"Build the Buzz" – the Bee Listening Project is a new ground-breaking national scientific venture utilising highly sensitive technological equipment to gather data from within the beehive and supported by the BBKA.*

### BULK BUY NOTICE

Orders for Wax Foundation & Apiguard will be ready for collection at the Thursday 3rd March Meeting. For those unable to attend the meeting and wish to collect from my home can contact me by email to make arrangements at; [lorna.pattle@outlook.com](mailto:lorna.pattle@outlook.com)

### Romford Division Contacts:

Secretary ~ Pat Allen

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Chairman ~ Jim McNeill

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Divisional Voting Member/Trustee ~ Paul Wiltshire

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Website: [www.ebka.org](http://www.ebka.org)



March 2016

## Romford Division

EBKA Charity Number: 1031419

### DATES FOR THE DIARY

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

**April meeting:** Thursday 7th, 8pm

**'Company Drinks'**

**Speaker:** Susanna Wallis

### Beekeeping notes for March ~ written by Pat Allen

The winter weather continues to keep us guessing from day to day! The bees are often flying though as I write it is still too cold to open up. But March may be very warm for all we know and you may be able to open your bees – **the temperature must be over 12°C though**. So make sure you are ready for the new season. Fresh pollen going in is a good sign, there should be a laying queen.

Mouseguards **must** be off by now, they knock the much-needed pollen off the legs of the foragers. You should be able to remove woodpecker guards too. If the bees need food, given them fondant, but do not keep them open for long, the brood must not get chilled. The bees need to raise new bees to replace the old winter bees which will be dying off at a fast rate.

If you wintered with a super under the brood box, then, at the end of the month, provided the weather is warm, swap the boxes back and put a queen excluder over the brood box. Most often the queen will be in the brood box, but if there is brood in the super she may be there. You can either shake all the bees from the super into the brood box, or you can leave things as they are (QX **under** the super) and next time it will be obvious if she is in the super and you can find her and put her in her rightful place.

Give them a super if they are building up well, you can put it over the crownboard if you are not sure they need it yet. Keep ahead with the supering.

## Romford Division - Annual Beekeepers Conference 5th November 2016

February saw the first committee meeting to begin the plans for this year's conference, which our club is hosting.

A Chair has been appointed – Helen Kingsford, and a secretary – Alan Kingsford. (That's the trouble having joint membership, one of us always ropes in the other!) Other committee members are Jim and Liz (see what I [mean one partner pulls in the other] – Terry, Bob and Dawn.

Pat, Lorna, Janet, Angela, Pádraig and Michael were unable to attend but are supporting us with ideas and by volunteering to take on certain roles. Between us we managed to go through all of the proposed tasks that will need to be done prior to the conference, and those to be done on the day. What came to light was the need for some more volunteers who can commit to helping out on conference day.

- We need 2 volunteers to help Liz organise hot drinks. There will be drink machines in use, but to keep the queues moving during coffee breaks, and to prevent late returns to the lecture hall, a couple of volunteers could hand out drinks, help to use the machine and so on.
- The raffle tickets will need many hands to help us sell them, again as quickly as possible.
- Car park may need volunteers to meet and greet delegates as they arrive. There will be security staff on duty, but a friendly face or 2 helping to keep the flow of traffic moving, giving directions into the building, would be even better. (Volunteering now does not mean you will have to come along to every committee meeting. Though you may be asked to sit in on one just prior to the big day to find out more about your role).

Our next committee meeting is 4th April, my house for 7:30. Do come along if you want to be part of organising this important event. Contact details below. We expect to have in excess of 120 people in attendance on the day. We can accommodate 150. It would be ideal if we sold 150 tickets. The more we sell, the closer we will get to breaking even, or at least running at a smaller loss. So it is vital that all club members put the date of the conference into their own diaries, and be ready to buy a ticket too.

Tickets will be on sale for £25, for which you will receive a meal; the menu offers 3 choices. Also you will hear from 3 speakers, who are sure to engage us with some very interesting topics. This is a chance to share and learn from other beekeepers. Not least it is an opportunity to gather around our own club members to show support for Romford's annual conference.

Romford's Annual Conference - 5/11/2016 – here we come!

by Helen Kingsford  
Show Sec and Conf. Committee Chair  
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## Spring Management - Pat Allen

Spring management actually begins before spring, with the preparation. Your bees may have survived winter but will they survive spring?

It will help your bees to have early blooming plants near the hives to provide a convenient supply of pollen. Ideal varieties are crocus (which will protect the foraging bees if it is windy), snowdrops, grape hyacinths, anemone and winter aconite.

The colony may expand and use up the stores, because of the weather and the short daylight hours it will mean the bees have just a short time to forage. It has been a mild winter and the queen may have continued to produce brood.

Spring is time to have a plan on hand to tackle varroa and decide which treatment you will be using and when you will be applying it. As the winter application of Oxalic Acid may not have been as effective as one would expect, owing to the weather, Pat advises using Apiguard, which should be applied at the end of February.

Prepare your plans for swarm control, swarm procedure and wing clipping. Ensure you have a nucleus hive ready as well as all the equipment needed to execute your plan. Repair, clean and get ready the brood boxes and record sheets.

Watch your bees to see whether they are taking pollen back to the hive, which is a good sign. Remove the mouse and woodpecker guards as this could knock off the pollen from the bees as they return to the hive. Look to see if there are dead bees around the hive. Signs of defaecation outside the hive may indicate Nosema or may be simply due to the weather being so awful the bees just step out far enough to go the toilet and then go straight back into the hive.

March is usually when you make your first inspection. You should not open your hive until the temperature reaches at least 12°C ; be very quick. You should look for worker bees at all stages. Do not be concerned about trying to find the queen, as speed is essential. Enter on your record sheets the number of frames with brood and quantity of stores, as you do not know when the weather will permit the next inspection. If the bees are near to starving put light syrup in a frame feeder or contact feeder or spray light syrup on combs over bees so they lick the syrup off each other. Fondant is no good if bees are close to starving. If the bees are feeding properly from stores you don't need to make pollen patties or give them fondant. If you are going to give patties to your bees do so now. They will only eat the fondant straight away, they do not store it.

In March put varroa inserts into hives and monitor the droppings. Use a tray of Apiguard and leave in hive for two weeks.

If you feel the bees need more room you can give them another super or you can put the super above the crownboard if you're undecided. On inspection, if your bees have died, you must close the hive to prevent robbing and investigate as to the reason why.

During the second inspection, look for the same things as the first inspection.

During March/April, do a spring clean. Prepare a spare brood box. It is a good idea to change the brood box. In April, consider changing brood frames. You should aim to change 3-4 frames each year. Remove the stores, wrap in cling film and freeze. They can be used for feeding in a nucleus. By April, inspections should be more frequent. You may want to Bailey Comb change or Shook Swarm. Nosema tests need to be carried out on a sample of at least 30 old bees. If you need any help with the test results you can communicate with your disease liaison contact.

Check the brood pattern. If the queen is laying drone and not worker bees get rid of her and raise a new queen. In May, again check for disease. Lift the frame, shake off the bees and check cells and cappings are smooth and dry and the larvae is a nice colour. You do not need to look for the queen. May is swarming month. They will not swarm without drones. Keep an eye on swarming.

JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL

