

March Beekeeping Notes ~ written by Pat Allen

We should be getting into spring by now but the weather continues to keep us guessing from day to day. And this on top of March being the most dangerous month for our bees even in a 'normal' year.

This is when your bees will be using up their stores quickly, yet there is still little outside the hive for them and short days mean there is not much foraging time. There is brood to feed and winter bees are now very old and rapidly dying off. You can see a lot by just watching the hive – pollen going in is a good sign, it generally means there is a laying queen inside. Bringing out dead bodies is also good.

By all means try to get a **very quick peep** inside, but make sure you do it when the **temperature is over 12°C**, and take out the minimum of frames you have to in order to check the situation. Remove mouseguards and woodpecker guards if they are still on. Give them fondant if they are short of stores.

If you wintered with super under 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. If you can't find her, shake all the bees from the super into the brood box.

Give them a super if they are doing well, or if you are not sure if they need one, you can put it over the crownboard (provided there are holes in the crownboard). Keep ahead with the supering.

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EBKA Charity Number: 1031419

March 2017

Romford Division

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Committee Meeting: Wednesday 15th March, 7.30, Jim's Place, Collier Row

April meeting: Thursday 6th at 8pm, Chadwick Hall, Gidea Park

Event: Candlemaking with Jim McNeill

EBKA AGM: Saturday 18th March at 2pm.

Details in *The Essex Beekeeper* magazine.

Please come and support your Division.

After the AGM itself there will be tasty refreshments and then a talk.

Honey Cakes, the Bake Off!

Time to get those recipe books out or get searching the web. We are proposing a change to the October Honey Show cake recipes and need your help.

At the May meeting we want as many of you as possible to bring along your homemade cakes, including recipes, made using honey. Two cakes would be excellent, one with fruit and one without, (don't forget the honey) but one will be most welcome. Everyone attending the May meeting will be able to taste and judge all the examples brought in with a view to finding the best for use as future show recipes. So this is your chance to make the changes.

Get thinking and baking for May! It could be your recipe that is chosen.

Angela Mander



BRENTWOOD BREWING COMPANY LIMITED – 2nd February 2017

We enjoyed a talk from the youngest brewers in the country, who are situated at Calcott Hall Farm, Ongar Road, Pilgrims Hatch, Brentwood. The brewery has achieved many awards for their beers i.e. Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival in 2007 and 2009, winning against 300 ales. The brewery has the capacity to produce 3,000 litres of ale producing 60 casks per brew, which is 4,320 pints twice a week. In 2009 they won a gold and silver at the Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival, East Region competition. Gold for the best strong ale 'Lumberjack' and silver for the best speciality beer 'Chockwork Orange'. In 2010 they achieved the Beer of the Festival, 'Summer Virgin'.

At the Colchester Festival their bottled beer made the finals of the Essex Food and Drink Awards for the Best Retail Product and won the award for the Best Growing Business in the Essex Business Excellence Awards. Since 2010 they have won a myriad awards, doubling up on some that they have won in previous years. The brewery offers a range of tours of 1 hour 30 mins or brewing experience days from 8.00 a.m. till 4.00 p.m.

The company is very environmentally friendly. All wastage goes to a local farm and also for compost to an allotment, resulting in no wastage, plus 78% of the hops are produced in England, keeping the carbon footprint to a minimum. We were all treated to a sample taster of the beer and had the opportunity to make purchases to enjoy at home!



One of the young brewers

JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL

Education

Beginner: The Beginners Course will begin in April. There are 12 students booked and there is space for a couple more.

Intermediate: A session on **Comb Changing** has been arranged for **Thursday 23rd March** at Thames Chase. Six people are booked into this session and there is space for more. **Contact Pat Allen if you are interested.**

Other topics will be covered at the two Teaching Apiary Meetings on Thursdays 6th July and 3rd August.

Bulk Buys

For those that have placed orders with me you will be emailed with an invoice together with method of payment in due course.

Items should be ready for collection after 11 March or can be picked up at the April meeting.

Lorna Pattle

Teaching Apiary Work Party

On a dull Saturday 11th February a hardy group of Romford Division members met to work on the Teaching Apiary. There had been lots of blackthorn stumps which were hazardous, so we had them ground down. The work party set about levelling the ground and improving the drainage. Dawn and Pat took on the lighter work of cleaning up the spare hive parts.

The weather was rainy and cold so the bees just sat tight and let us get on with it. The lads also laid some long concrete slabs to stand the spare equipment on. We hope to grass the area so that it will not be muddy and the vegetation can be kept short by mowing.



Many thanks to everyone who came along to help – left to right, Viorel Stefoni, Terry Watson, Jim McNeill, John Whittard, Tom Keeper, Pat Allen, Dawn Doyland, Alan Kingsford, Brian O'Sullivan and Michael Speakman-Bell who took the photo.