

### April Beekeeping Notes

Time to have a look inside your colonies, though keep it quick as the weather may still not be very warm. Watch the hives from outside before opening, this will tell you a lot about what is going on inside. Stores may be getting low and you may even find that swarming preparations are underway (but you've got your equipment ready, haven't you?).

Monitor the varroa drop for a few days and record the result. If there are lots, then you need to use MAQS, which can be used with supers on, as it is too late to use Apiguard now.

**Get your queens clipped this month!** Get help with this if you cannot do it yourself.

Finally – book yourself in to the Basic Assessment Prep or one or more Improver sessions.

**Pat Allen**

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### Websites:

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

[romfordbeekeepers.wordpress.com](http://romfordbeekeepers.wordpress.com)



EBKA Charity Number: 1031419

April 2019

## Romford Division

### DATES FOR THE DIARY

**Committee Meeting:** Wednesday 8th May 2019, 7.30pm, Jim's Place, Collier Row

**May meeting: Thursday 2nd May 2019, 8pm**

**Venue:** Chadwick Hall Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL

**Topic:** 'Taking Exams & Beginner Experiences'

**Speakers:** Tom Keeper and Roger Honey

### April Wax Day

**Saturday 27th April 2019:** At Havering Out apiary, Pinewood Road, Orange Tree Hill, RM4 1PH. The opening of the Don Bond Apiary Storage Facility & Wax Day, starting at 11.00am.

We shall be unveiling the Don Bond plaque and then go on to make candles and wax foundation. Tea, coffee, biscuits available but bring your own packed lunch.

There is plenty of free parking **but make sure you park beyond the barrier.**



If you are coming to the opening ceremony on the 27th April and you want to make some candles and you have any fairly clean blocks of wax, please bring it along with you. This will be weighed out against your candles or foundation. Foundation will most likely be national as I don't have a bigger former. Do not worry if you don't have any wax, still turn up; there will be wax there for you to use.

**Jim McNeill**

## FROM BEE KEEPER TO BEE FARMER –

Michael Coe 7 March 2019

Michael was first introduced to beekeeping when an old beekeeper named Brian visited his school to explain beekeeping to the children.

Michael qualified as a carpenter, but many years later he was approached by his uncle to take over 30 hives from an old beekeeper who had died. Michael's uncle allowed him to have the hives on his ground behind his house. Coincidentally, the elderly beekeeper was the one who visited Michael's school! He became so engrossed in his beekeeping activities that he decided to give up his carpentry and concentrate on beekeeping.

In 2012 Michael negotiated with the East of England Co-op to supply them with his own brand of honey - Great Tilkey Honey. They originally wanted him to have bees in Norfolk too, but Michael explained it would be too far away from his home for him to properly maintain the hives, therefore the Co-op settled for Essex, Suffolk and East Anglian Honey.

The Co-op required Michael to have a specific honey preparation and storage area. He had a shed installed in his uncle's garden, having it converted into a purpose-built honey room and an old sturdily built WW2 air raid shelter with 13" thick walls for storage of equipment.

Michael had to produce his own bar code for the supermarkets and now has his own custom designed labels featuring 'Beatrice

the Honey Bee'. The whole of Michael's business is still all done by hand, even jarring and labelling the 6-10 tons of honey he produces each year. The business involves his wife and son too so is truly a family business.

They invested in buying a patch of land in Bradwell for an apiary and obtained permission to build a pole barn. Michael and his wife planted hedges of bee friendly plants. The hedge is now 20ft tall. It took a lot of care and attention initially as the weather conditions determined a lot of watering during the summer. Michael now has 40-45 hives in his apiary as well as having hives on various farms in the area at the request of farmers wanting the bees on their property to assist their crops.

Michael was entered by the Co-op to become Producer of the Year, which had stiff competition with large, well established companies. Nevertheless, he won and as a result has become quite a celebrity on the local media. As a consequence, he has been approached by Morrisons to produce honey for their shops as well as the Co-op, but there are only so many hours in the day!

All this started from an elderly dedicated beekeeper named Brian visiting a school and passing on his love of beekeeping to a little boy. What a fantastic legacy!

**JILLY SPEAKMAN-BELL**

## Courses

**Beginners:** The Beginners Course starts on Tuesday 16th April, 7.30pm. Venue: Education Room, Thames Chase, Pike Lane, Upminster, RM14 3NS. We have 21 students booked in.

**Basic Assessment Preparation:** Pat Allen encourages all who have been keeping bees for two or three seasons (or more) and have not yet taken the Basic Assessment, to consider taking it this year. You will find that it improves your bee husbandry and your confidence. Some Allotment Associations (and other sites) require the Basic Assessment Certificate as proof of competence before they allow bees on their allotments. It is purely practical, no written stuff, and takes about an hour. Pat will run a training session for those who are interested in taking this Assessment. It will run in the second half of April at the Teaching Apiary and the session will last for about two hours. Basic Assessments are done during May, June and July so there will be plenty of time for you to get the application in after the training session and to get in a bit of practice!

**Improvers:** If there is sufficient interest, then Pat Allen and Paul Wiltshire will run some 'Improver' sessions on specific topics. Let Pat know as soon as possible (email please) which of these you are interested in and if there are particular dates/times you really cannot make. Each session will last about two hours. **Swarm Control** (will run in April), **Comb Changing** (April), **Managing Nucs & Mini-Nucs** (May or June), **Integrated Varroa Management, Honey Extraction** (late July). All the sessions, except honey extraction, will include 'techniques for finding the queen'.

**Pat Allen**

## Bulk Buys

Thank you to those members who have paid and collected their orders. For those who have not as yet responded to my Invoice email sent **4th March 2019** for the orders they placed, could you please contact me and arrange payment for collection.

I will be able to take some orders to the meeting on 4th April.

**Lorna Pattle**