



Romford Division



Dates for the Diary

Committee Meeting: Tuesday 27th September 2022, 7.30pm, Zoom

Next Meeting: Thursday 6th October, Chadwick Hall RM2 5EL.

Topic: Bumblebees and other Bees

Venue: Chadwick Hall RM2 5EL.

Speaker: Ted Benton

Honey Filtering, a familiar sight in many of our kitchens at this time of year.

Photo, Graeme Ellis



SEPTEMBER Beekeeping Notes

We may have a bit of leeway this year with our winter preparations. That is, if the weather continues to be very warm. Ideally any honey you want to take should be taken off by the end of August and the wet supers given back for the bees to clean up. You can then stack the supers carefully for winter. If the supers have had brood in them, either discard these combs altogether (best) or put them in the freezer for a couple of days to kill off the wax moth, then stack them away from wax moth.

This year, you may get away with taking the honey in early September, but do not leave it too late. You need to treat the bees against Varroa, and get the feed into them before the cooler nights set in. Even if you left them honey, give them a feed to keep the queen laying and producing those valuable winter bees.

Don't forget to record any treatment you give the bees – this is a statutory requirement. Also, put in the varroa floor insert while you are feeding and treating.

Once feeding and treating are over, remove the varroa insert, and **remove the queen excluder**. If you are wintering on National brood + super, put the super below the brood box. Close off ventilation at the top of the hive, ventilation at the bottom is quite enough.

Pat Allen

Taster Sessions

We planned two Taster Sessions this summer, and ran the first in July. The weather was good and everyone enjoyed the experience. Unfortunately, the August session had to be cancelled because the weather was far too hot to have hives open and not good for people in bee suits either. We will have to rethink when we run these next year, as they are popular and a good way to introduce the public to the importance of bees and other pollinators.

Pat Allen

Romford honey show, it's showtime!

Saturday 15th October 2022

Please support this year's annual show by entering as many classes as you can from the schedule. We need to impress our show judge with plenty of entries. There is something for everyone, from novices to seasoned exhibitors. Even if you have no honey you can enter the bakery classes or submit a photograph.

I will be taking entries at the October meeting where I will give out labels for your exhibits. Or you can email me with your entries to angelam59@hotmail.co.uk

Labels will then be handed to you on the day when you deposit your entries.

The show will take place at the Ascension Church in Collier Row. RM5 2BA.

Judging will take place in the afternoon, followed by the annual supper when all the winners will be announced. Keep the date in your diaries, details for the supper in next month's newsletter.

Preparation for the honey show, Claire O'Brien. 4th August 2022

What is the most important thing being judged? Honey judges always wear a white coat and a hat reminiscent of a delicatessen counter at a supermarket, indicating the importance of food hygiene.

The judge uses an elimination process. Firstly, the honey has to pass the schedule rules and hygiene rules, followed by aroma, flavour and viscosity. The judge always starts with lightest honey, working towards the darker categories. Between each category the judge will sip water to cleanse the palate.

If the schedule for the show says matching pairs, the jars must be an exact match. The size of the honey jars must match, and the honey must be entered into the correct class. All honey shows have entries of 1lb jars, which often look the same, but this is not always the case, as you have to have the manufacturers mould mark on the bottom of the jar. The judge is not concerned about the batch number of the jars, this is a myth.

The category entered must match the show schedule, the judge uses coloured grading glass to determine if the honey is in the correct category. If in doubt about whether the colour is light or medium enter your honey into both colour categories.

The judge will look to see if there is a light gap between the fill line and the lid. If there is, the honey would be eliminated as it would not be regarded as a full jar.

The cleanliness and hygiene of the jars and lids is imperative, the lids must be rust free and not dented in the slightest, this would be regarded as unhygienic. Plastic lids can be used - they are a lot easier to clean and can be reused. Beware that not all shows allow white plastic lids, but gold plastic lids are usually allowed. Is the jar shiny or sticky and is there any fluff on the jar? The judge will shine a torch through the honey to see if there are any hairs, bee parts or wax within. It may be surprising to find that 10% of honey jars are eliminated at this stage. If the honey has started to granulate when it is entered into the clear honey category the honey jar will be eliminated.

Preparation for the honey show, Continued.

The final selection to be judged is aroma, viscosity and flavour. A honey sample is taken using a glass rod, the viscosity of the honey is noted at the same time. If they are in any doubt about this in the slightest, they will use a refractometer to accurately determine the water content of the honey.

If the lid is clean, you will hear a satisfying rattle as you open the honey, if any honey is spilt over the edges the clean rattle won't be there. The judge will immediately smell the honey, If the jar has travel spills on the lid, this would not be penalised, but dirt or rust marks would result in elimination. Before you put the lid on for the first time, wipe around the rubber seal of the lid so that the moulding powder on the lid will not drop into the honey, giving it a dusting on top.

Before filling your jars, put them in the dishwasher on the hottest setting with no detergent, then dry jars in the oven to prevent any water marks. Claire does not wash the lids for fear they will get water under the rubber seal.

Lastly, the judge will taste the honey. The first jar is kept as a benchmark and all the proceeding jars are gauged against that initial jar, either being placed above or below it.

Claire runs her honey through two standard metal honey filters, with an additional sheet of 200 micron food grade muslin, the honey runs straight into the settling buckets.

Once poured into jars, she labels them meticulously with the date of extraction, water content, flavour and colour. This makes it easy for her to choose honey for shows as she already has the information to hand.

Claire explained that she likes to jar four, one-pound jars straight away, to see if it will granulate. She then leaves the honey to settle so that any air bubbles will rise to the surface, the lids go on a week before the show and does not open them again, or the aroma can be lost.

To clean the outside of the jars methylated spirits can be used two days before the show to make the glass shine and will evaporate off with no smell left behind.

When you put your exhibitor's label on, you must have them in the correct place on the jar. Claire demonstrated a wooden jig that she places her jar into, this then helps her align the label correctly, but warned that jar heights differ between manufacturers due to the dimples on the base.

Jilly Speakman-Bell

Annual EBKA 2022 Conference

Sunday 13th November 2022 10am – 3.30pm

Copped Hall, Epping CM16 5HR

'Pressure on Pollinators'

Speakers: Clive de Bruyn, Peter Kennedy and Ben Woodcock

Epping Forest Division are hosting this year's annual EBKA conference with knowledgeable speakers on 'Pressure on Pollinators' covering topics on pests and diseases, environmental factors and predators that affect honey bees and other pollinators.

Tickets are £25 including lunch and refreshments. Bookings may only be made via Eventbrite.

Refreshments: Please make a lunch menu selection when booking your ticket's.

Tea, coffee and biscuits at Registration, Tea, coffee and homemade biscuits at morning break. Lunch will be vegetable soup and EITHER warm homemade quiche with coleslaw and salad OR hot jacket potato with coleslaw and salad, followed by fruit from the orchard at Copped Hall. Detailed selection on booking form. Tea, coffee and homemade cake at afternoon break.

Copped Hall will be offering short tours of the first floor of the mansion during the lunch break for a donation to the restoration fund. NB There are 30 steps up to the first floor and there will be time to go on the tour and eat lunch. Please select this option when booking your tickets.

Full details are on the Eventbrite booking page, link below :

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/313533315587>

This is a worthwhile event to attend, so we do hope you will attend.

Sue Richardson

Copped Hall



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Websites:

<https://ebka.org>

<https://romfordbeekeepers.org>