



Romford Division



Dates for the Diary

Committee Meeting: Thursday 18th September, 7:30pm, via Zoom.

Next Division Meeting: Thursday 2nd October

Topic: TBC

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

Speaker: TBC

A bee emerging from a sand burrow

I took this photo in July, on Mersea Island. The soft ground along the coastal path was dotted with these beautiful furry mining bees which belong to the family Andrenidae.

I believe this one is a yellow legged mining bee, I'd initially mistaken its furry legs for pollen

Graeme Ellis



SEPTEMBER Beekeeping Notes

Any honey you want to take from your bees should be off the hive by now, and the wet super(s) given back for the bees to clean up (give them about a week to do this). Store the supers carefully for winter: super combs with pollen in them will go mouldy during winter so either discard these or give them to the bees in a winter super. Super combs that have had brood in them will surely be attacked by wax moth so these are best discarded. Stack the supers carefully to keep out mice or rats (I put a queen excluder under the stack), and put the supers somewhere cold.

You should make sure your colonies have enough stores to see them through winter and feed them strong syrup if they need topping up. Strong syrup is 1kg sugar to 0.6litre water (2lbs white granulated sugar to 1 pint water) and at this strength 8lbs sugar will result in one gallon of syrup. I give my bees (in National hives) 2 gallons/10 litres syrup. A National brood frame will hold about 5lbs syrup, a super frame about 3lbs. It is a good idea to give the bees some syrup even if you think they have enough honey, and this is because the syrup stores will not granulate, whereas the honey they gather may granulate and be so hard and dry that the bees cannot use it and they will starve despite having loads of stores.

If you are using any Varroa treatments these should be on the hives already, especially if they are temperature-dependent. I know we've had heatwaves all summer but we cannot rely on the weather continuing to be warm, especially overnight. Remember to record your use of Varroa treatments and keep the records for 5 years. And don't forget that the **under-floor inserts** must be **IN** while **treating** and **feeding**.

Once feeding and treating are finished, remove the insert and **remove the queen excluder**. If you are wintering on brood and super, put the super under the brood box. Close off any ventilation at the top of the hives, ventilation at the bottom is enough.

Pat Allen

EFB Update

I am delighted to say that my bees have been declared EFB-free and the **Standstill Order has been withdrawn!!!** The colonies are doing very well, and I can recommend the use of 'shook swarm' as a comb-replacement technique.

Pat Allen

BBKA Exams

Last month our Education Secretary, Linda Dulieu, congratulated our members who passed their Basic exams. This month we have two more members to congratulate. Ken Shutt took and passed his Basic Assessment and Mark Wood passed the Module 1 theory exam. Well done both of you.

I would just like to remind members that the Division and the EBKA CEC have awards for those who take and pass BBKA exams. So, as well as increasing your knowledge and confidence in your beekeeping, it doesn't need to cost you anything (except the studying work, of course!).

Miss Avey Award: Applies to the Assessments

Basic - Pass with Distinction : £50

General Husbandry Pass : £80*

Advanced Husbandry Pass : £100*

(*No distinctions given for these higher assessments, you either Pass or Fail)

Ted Hooper Award: Applies to the Module Exams

Any module - Pass with Distinction : £50

In addition to this, if you pass any exam, Romford Division will reimburse your exam fee!

Pat Allen

Beginners beekeeping Course

We have a waiting list for the beginners beekeeping course for 2026, as such we won't be advertising on the website this year, anyone interested will need to contact us directly.

Linda Dulieu

Annual EBKA 2025 Conference

Saturday 11th October

Holiday Inn Colchester, Abbots Lane Eight Ash Green, CO6 3QL

Price £29.00 this includes Teas and Coffee on arrival and a hot and cold Buffet for lunch.

Speakers

Kevin Thorn: is a bee farmer with 50 hives in and around Lavenham, Suffolk. He is passionate about improving his bees to be calm, healthy and productive and working to educate beekeepers in this.

Briget Strawbridge: is a wildlife gardener, amateur naturalist, and an advocate of bees. Based in Cornwall, she writes and campaigns to raise awareness of the importance and diversity of native wild bees and other pollinating insects. She is the author of *Dancing with Bees: A Journey Back to Nature*.

Dr Gerry Brierley: A pharmacy in a box. Apitherapy is a practice that uses the healing powers of honeybees. Gerry first came across it by accident when she became very ill with Lyme disease - a debilitating condition caused by tick bites. Treatment for this disease, in Gerry's Case, involved a lengthy course of bee stings! Her ongoing research has led to further interest in other apitherapy practices such as the use of propolis, pollen and royal jelly.

Colleen Manley

Romford Honey Show, Saturday 18th October 2025

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 don't have any honey to show, you could try out one or two bakery classes or submit a photograph. Participating can be a very rewarding experience, showcasing the efforts you and the bees put in every year.

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 exhibits. If you need any help with filling in the form or need advice on which class to enter, please contact me.

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 early evening when all the winners will be announced. Keep the date free in your diaries, further details for booking the supper will be in next month's newsletter. A chance to socialise and catch up with fellow Romford beekeepers.

Angela Mander



YLH Update

As of 21st August, the Animal and Plant Health Agency's National Bee Unit (NBU) informed us that they have received further credible reports of YLH's. This means that currently there has been a total of 266 sightings in 2025. Since the last update, twelve more nests have been discovered.

London; Ilford, Barkingside

Kent; Stonecrouch (A nest was wrongly reported on 31/7/25, but a nest in same location found on 20/8/25), Ashford, Exted, Wingham, Thanington, Lenham, Wittersham

Surrey; Holmbury St Mary, Dorking

East Sussex; Two nests at Udimore, Four Oaks

As of 21st August, 74 confirmed nests have been found this year.

Garry Furnell

YLH Update in BBKA News

There is substantial (and worrying!) info about the YLAH situation in the September **BBKA News**, which everyone should have received by now. *"Nest analysis provides the first evidence of a second generation in the UK. The NBU report that this is not yet proof of an established population"*

Graeme Ellis

Visiting a Nursery with bees

As a beekeeper of just over a decade I often forget that our hobby is in fact a little unusual, the initial excitement of learning about them and then relaying this knowledge to friends and family, whether they want to hear it or not has long since subsided, something they are rather pleased to report!

I have a friend who works in a Children's nursery and I was asked if I would come along a few years ago and talk to the children about Bees, without giving it too much thought I said "yes" and then as the date came closer I was working out what I'd say, what do I know about bees? What would they ask me? I put together a list of items to take as talking points;

- A frame of honey.
- An old frame showing the wax comb, preferably without wax moth, or do I want Wax moth? I'd best get a frame out of the freezer!
- A honey extractor? No, far too big to take along.
- Some wooden lollysticks so they can try the honey straight from the comb, purchased from eBay with days to spare.
- A smoker but I can't light it, do they have an outside? But then the kids will smell of smoke...
- A teaching hive? Yes, Forest Farm have one I can borrow.

The list was endless, and most items ruled out as too difficult, along with perhaps bringing bees in an observation hive? I decided to settle for; Wax, a drawn super frame with honey, child size bee suit for photos, a teaching hive. Job done!

I'd decided not to put together a prepared "talk" rather ask and answer questions to keep their attention, this turned out to be the best approach. All the children were assembled, maybe 20 or so, all sat cross legged on a rug, an opening line of "who is scared of Bees" soon got things underway and then the mystery of opening a teaching hive to see the frames inside, pointing out the queen and rings of honey and brood... Ok now I was losing them, time to bring out the honey "who likes honey" many small hands went up and an orderly queue was formed, the "nannies" were impressed I'd been able to get them to do this! as was I! New lolly sticks handed out as each hand came towards the frame of honey, "don't put your fingers in it!" used sticks placed into a bowl, honey dripping down hands, pleased faces, most coming back for seconds and thirds. "Who is scared of bees now?" I asked, no hands went up. My work here was done!

I was asked back each year, and then my own son, Henry (now 2) joined a different nursery and I was asked if I'd come in and give a talk there, quite how they knew I was a beekeeper I'm still not sure. I asked staff the question "Would I be able to bring some bees in?" expecting a "no", I explained the observation hive and showed them photos, much to my surprise this was acceptable after some risk assessment questions.

Continued, Visiting a Nursery with bees

I made arrangements to visit both nurseries on the same day, and asked to borrow Romford Beekeeper's observation hive. A delighted Pat was happy to offer up the kit, though Tony had to retrieve it from the depths of a shed, Thanks Tony! Pat brought it along to the April meeting to collect, and its simplicity came as a surprise to me, a wooden nuc box housing five frame's with a simple queen excluder grid on top, and the upper (sixth) frame housing the Queen, this sits between two sheets of glass, all held in place with adjustable clamps at the side. Many of those in attendance at the April meeting were intrigued as this is not normal beekeeping kit!

I took the day off work as this was now a crafted bee talk, being early in the year I had a new laying Queen in a polystyrene nuc box and the transfer of frames was simple, find the Queen put her in the top half, transfer the rest to the nuc below, a towel over the observation hive kept Queenie in the dark, and presumably less stressed. A water mister was used numerous times to spray the vented floor and keep the bees cool.



The children were excited about the bee talk as they'd been told there would be honey, but the intrigue of what was under the towel added to the excitement, especially the reveal which needed to be done carefully, I didn't want to scare the children.. Or possibly the bees.



After the initial reveal, the children were brought over in groups of four, two on each side, keen to spot the Queen.

Continued, Visiting a Nursery with bees



I lifted the observation hive onto a stand so that the children could listen to the bees from the vented floor beneath, a few breaths made them change pitch!

It definitely made for a more engaging talk. Henry stood next to me which made for some great photos, particularly as I was in my suit (photo below on the far right), he ruined the illusion a little for any parents seeing this on Instagram.... Perhaps he'll remember when he's older?

Apparently I'm the highlight of the year, I'm sure they say that to all the guests, after all how can I compete with a fire engine! 5000 bees and honey helps me come close.

Graeme Ellis



BBKA September Talk: 'Preparation for Showing'

The next in our series of Zoom talks will be 'Preparation for Showing' with Liz Westcott on Tuesday 16th September 2025 at 7pm. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Liz will give an overview of how to prepare honey and beeswax for the Show table. She will be looking at processing wax to a good standard so it is then possible to use it for making candles, one ounce blocks or a cake of wax. She understands that everyone's approach to wax processing differs depending on the facilities and resources available to them. There are several different methods of doing this. Liz will show you the method which works best for her but you may well do it differently and as long as clean wax is the end product then all is well. Liz will also talk about preparing honey for the Show table.

Liz has been keeping bees in Brixham, South Devon, for twenty years. She started showing about fifteen years ago and has enjoyed a certain amount of success at local honey shows. She is President of Devon BKA, Chair of Torbay BKA and for the last eight years has been the Chair and Show Secretary for the Bees and Honey Marquee at Devon County Show where the Devon Honey Show is held each year.

Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81233819992?pwd=DYMZxTImJpRCLJjYjvblxgybQQdSZ.1>

Meeting ID: 812 3381 9992 Passcode: 527929

Colleen Manley

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