

# THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Photograph of Clive deBruyn by Paul Abbott,  
which he has titled 'The Bee Whisperer'

## Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

*Registered Charity number 1031419*

**No. 608**

[www.essexbeekeepers.com](http://www.essexbeekeepers.com)

**August  
2015**

# EBKA Divisional Meetings

## August & September 2015

<b>6 August</b>	Thursday 8.00pm	<b>Harlow</b>	<b>Harlow Honey Show</b> - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
<b>9 August</b>	Sunday 2.30pm	<b>Saffron Walden</b>	Apiary Meeting - End of Season tasks. Talk and demo by Malcolm Legg at his apiary in Thaxted CM6 2RB
<b>15 August</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Epping Forest</b>	<b>Extraction Day</b> — Chapel Barn
<b>17 August</b>	Monday 7.30pm	<b>Chelmsford</b>	<b>'Preparing for Winter'</b> The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
<b>19 August</b>	Wednesday 6.00pm	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	<b>Harvesting Honey</b> - Divisional Apiary, Spital Road CM9 6EE
<b>23 August</b>	Sunday 3.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	Apiary Meeting - Coney Green, Great Bardfield CM7 4PY. Telephone Pat Rowland 01376 326 036
<b>27 August</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Colchester</b>	<b>'Uniting Colonies'</b> - Tom & Lydia at the Langham Community Centre, School Road, Colchester CO4 5PA
<b>29 August</b>	Saturday	<b>Romford</b>	<b>Outing to Barnards Farm, Brentwood Road, West Horndon CM13 3LX</b>
<b>3 Sept</b>	Thursday 8.00pm	<b>Harlow</b>	<b>'Winter Preparation'</b> - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
<b>3 Sept</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Saffron Walden</b>	<b>'The Great Honey Bake Off'</b> - Preparing and showing off baking with honey. Swards End Village Hall CB10 2LG
<b>4 Sept</b>	Friday 8.00pm	<b>Romford</b>	<b>'Advice and guidance for Annual Honey Show</b> - Jim McNeill. Chadwick Hall, St. Michaels Church, Main Road, Gidea Park, Romford RM2 5EL
<b>9 Sept</b>	Wednesday 7.30pm	<b>Dengie 100 &amp; Maldon</b>	Members Meeting - The Oakhouse, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
<b>12 &amp; 13 Sept</b>	Saturday / Sunday	<b>County Event</b>	<b>EBKA Annual Honey Show</b> at Barleylands Country Show, Billericay CM11 2UD
<b>19 Sept</b>	Thursday 7.30pm	<b>Epping Forest</b>	<b>'Equipment Husbandry Day'</b> - Chingford Horticultural Hall
<b>27 Sept</b>	Sunday 3.00pm	<b>Braintree</b>	<b>Divisional Honey Show</b> - White Notley Village Hall, 43 The Street, White Notley CM8 1RH.

**Note to Secretaries:      Please inform the Editor of the details of your  
Divisional Monthly Meeting so that it can be included in these listings**

**Deadline:    4th of the preceding month**

## **Volunteers Wanted**

**for EBKA Annual Honey Show**

**at Barleylands nr. Billericay**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September**

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## **CEC Beekeeping Skills Workshops in 2015 -2016**

### **Anaphylaxis Management and Resuscitation training for Beekeepers**

#### **Microscopy**

The County Executive Committee is keen to continue the Skills Workshops in 2015 – 2016. These will support EBKA members at County level where Divisional training is more difficult. But with the 50:50 funding, those gaining from the experiences are expected to carry best practice back to their Divisions.

### **Anaphylaxis Management & Resuscitation training for Beekeepers.**

Many of you will have read the recent articles in BeeCraft on health and safety with special respect to beekeeping; the most notable aspect being anaphylaxis. You may also know that there was an incident of this at an apiary meeting in the Home Counties last year! The BeeCraft articles were written by Andrea Woolley and we have been lucky to be able to book her to work with EBKA on a county skills course on **15<sup>th</sup> November 2015**. The venue will be at **Salings Millennium Hall** and the training will include among other things:

- practical first aid – manikins & trainer adrenaline pens, stings and anaphylaxis management, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), unconsciousness and choking and what to do in an emergency.

Because it is felt that all Divisions need an expert in this field and there is responsibility which delegates will take back and use in the planning and effecting of apiary meetings, the CEC will pay the full fee for delegates. It is also felt that delegates should ideally be committee members. If you feel that you would like a place, please let your Secretary or Chair know. There will be 15 places, and each Division should send at least one representative.

## Microscopy

After the success of the microscopy course run by Graham Royle in October 2013, we are planning another similar event on **27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016**. In order that more people can benefit from Graham's expertise and gain the key microscopy skills needed by the hobbyist beekeeper, we are running a shorter course, twice, one on Saturday and one on Sunday.

The course will include :-

- microscopes structure and function;
- testing for *Nosema* and acarine;
- bee gut dissection or pollen analysis, and
- slides making.

It will provide a good start to anyone wanting to take the BBKA microscopy exam, but not be comprehensive. But, we can therefore have 24 delegates over the two day.

**Please email me at [jane.ridler@uwclub.net](mailto:jane.ridler@uwclub.net) if you are interested in this course and also inform your Divisional Secretary or Chair.** As with all of the CEC Skills courses, it is important that there are representatives from each Division. More information on costs and allocation will follow, depending on the response from you.

Jane Ridler  
EBKA Education Secretary

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Regards, Honey Helpers

## Bee Dance Moves

courtesy of Reigate BKA - via Ebees

Honey bees are certainly accomplished dancers with different choreography for different occasions. Dancing is one of their prime ways of communicating, and the messages can be both complex and simple. Besides the well known **Waggle Dance**, some of the simple communication dance moves include:

**Tremble Dance** - used by returning foragers to encourage other workers to assist in unloading their nectar.

**Shaking Tremble Dance** - a variation of the Tremble which is a request to be groomed.

**DVAV** (dorsoventral abdominal vibrating dance) - this recruits more bees to forage during a sudden or plentiful flow of nectar.

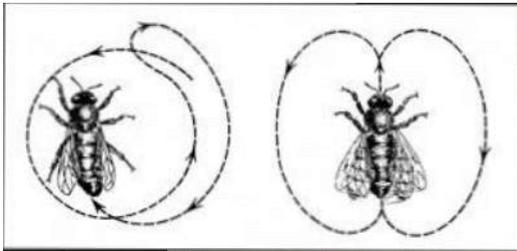
**Buzzing Run Dance** - associated with swarming. It starts when a bee runs in a straight line whilst buzzing its wings, and collides with another bee, they touch antennae buzz again and run off to collide with more bees. The dance and collisions cascade across the hive, with bees buzzing, running, and colliding until they swarm.

**Break Dance**- a variant of the Buzzing Run and performed by a swarm before flying off to their new home.

**Beeping**- this is when 'scout' bees who believe that the potential nesting site they have discovered is preferable to one that another 'scout' bee is trying to communicate by dancing. They butt the dancing 'scout' bee and let out a high-pitched noise to put the bee off their dance stride. The most complex communication and the best choreographed dances are those associated with telling other workers about the location of good forage (or a new nesting site). Foragers returning from a good location will run and push other workers performing a ....

**Jostle Dance** to tell other bees they are about to do an important dance. A variation of this called the **Spasmodic Dance** includes food sharing and has a similar objective..

## The Round Dance



This dance is used for food sources that are close to the hive (25 - 100 m or less). The dancing forager first distributes some of her nectar, and then runs in a small circle, switching direction every so often. She then distributes nectar

again, and usually repeats the dance three times. This dance does not give directional information. The audience bees fly out in search of the food source that they know must be close by, and has been 'scented' by the original dancing forager.

**The Sickle Dance:** This is a figure of eight dance without any waggle in the middle. It is used for food sources that are an intermediate distance away.

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## What are Neonicotinoids anyway ?

Neonicotinoid pesticides are nicotine-like chemicals that act on the nervous systems of insects. The pesticide targets specific areas of the insect central nervous system. At low levels, they cause nervous stimulation. However, at high levels over stimulation occurs, which causes paralysis and death. Pesticides made using neonicotinoids are water soluble, which means they can be applied to the soil and taken up by the whole plant. Pesticide is therefore detectable in all parts of the plant: roots, leaves, stems, sap, nectar and pollen.

Neonicotinoids are often applied as seed treatments, i.e. coatings applied to the seeds before planting. They pose a lower threat to mammals and the environment than many older pesticide sprays.

Debate, lobbying and commentaries about their use continues, with many legislators reacting and banning them. Research about their impact on bees also continues, with no definitive conclusion, but they remain a severe concern. *Acknowledgements to Reigate BKA*

## Wasps



Wasps have taken over this bird nesting box completely, having built an annexe at the front and utilised the breather holes in the base to create extra space. They weren't creating a problem for the house owners, but it does show how creative they can be. Later in the month wasps could well become a problem for beekeepers, as they seek out sweet treats, and start appearing in pub gardens and litter baskets containing discarded sweets and the like. Wasp larvae require high protein food to help them develop and this normally comes from insects, the thoraxes of which are taken back to the nest. It is the thorax which contains all the muscles (protein). When the larvae are fed, they exude a sweet substance which the adult wasps crave. This is their reward, but as the number of adult wasps grows, and the queen wasp lowers her rate of egg laying, the amount of protein required, is considerably reduced, and so are the rewards. The increased number of adult wasps now have to get their 'sugar fix' from other sources, and so they resort to beer glasses, old apple cores - and most devastatingly, beehives.

You can take measures to reduce the carnage. You could stand with a fly swat and plays a version of wasp tennis, but it doesn't take much imagination to realise that this is fraught with hazards. Wasp traps are simple to make, cheap and very effective.



On no account fill them with honey, or sugar syrup as you will almost certainly succeed in trapping your own bees. The cheapest supermarket fruit jam is the answer. Dilute a dessert spoonful of the stuff in hot water. Place enough of this liquid in another jam jar, so that it is about one third full. Using a screwdriver, or such, make a hole in the lid, just over ¼ inch in diameter. You now have a very successful wasp trap. Place it near your hive and you will divert the wasps'

attention. When the trap is full, simply pour the contents into a sieve, over a bowl. Then pour the collected liquid back into the trap. There are numerous variations on this theme, which can be found by googling 'wasp trap', but remember, only put jam and water in it.

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## **A vote of thanks to Clive de Bruyn NDB (The “Bee Whisperer”):**

**On behalf Southend on Sea Beekeepers:**

At a recent meeting of the Southend Division of the EBKA we welcomed that distinguished Essex based Beekeeper/Demonstrator and International Lecturer, Clive de Bruyn NDB, as our guest speaker.

As usual, Clive gave a dynamic fact- filled delivery, in his characteristic, friendly, laid-back style. Using an overhead projector, changing the transparencies with the panache of a matador; without a laptop computer, and definitely no “power-point presentation”; he roamed energetically up and down the hall, asking challenging apiaristical questions of both novice and “expert” beekeepers alike. All that was lacking was a flip-chart to recapture the consummate lecturing skills of a bygone age!

The topic of his presentation was “Maintaining Healthy Colonies”. Clive both entertained and educated his spell-bound audience with some interesting statements, thus:

- “I never give talks on disease – I only give talks on maintaining healthy colonies....”
- “There is no chemical that you can put into a beehive that doesn’t have side effects, and what you have to do is weigh up the benefits between letting the colony succumb – and in some cases that might not be a bad thing – or doing some treatment, helping the colony survive and letting nature take its course....”
- “So, if you are a beginner in beekeeping, the first requisite you need fundamental to your beekeeping is knowledge of what healthy brood looks like, and recognising healthy adult bees. You get this not by reading books, not by listening to me, but by hours and hours of looking at comb, and you won’t get it any other way. It’s experience. You ought to know what eggs look like, where they are, how many there are in a cell. You need to know the developmental stages of the larvae, Also, what sealed brood looks like; being able to recognise pollen, nectar, and sealed honey. All of these things are important. You require

this as a background; it's your greatest defence. When you open up a colony and these signs of health are not present; then there may be something wrong.”

- “What are my criteria for being a beekeeper – a good beekeeper?. You should not be a nuisance to your family and friends, you should not be a nuisance to your neighbours and you should not be a nuisance to your fellow beekeepers by harbouring diseases and doing nothing about it.”
- “What is the most serious problem that bees have to deal with? The biggest problem to bees are beekeepers!”

A fun-filled question and answer session followed the unique presentation, and Southend beekeepers learnt much about developing apiaristical skills; plus the joys and science of their chosen craft. Thanks Clive. Enjoyment wise, it really was a veritable, stonking, unsurpassed, “no better brainer” of an evening!

On a personal note, I have known Clive de Bruyn since first meeting him in the early nineteen eighties, lecturing at a weekend residential course run by The Kent Beekeepers' Association at Wye Agricultural College. Shortly afterwards, Clive was appointed Essex County Beekeeping Instructor at Writtle College, upon the retirement of Ted Hooper. The rest is history! Clive has a “hands-on” approach to Beekeeping, and his textbook: “*Practical Beekeeping*” is a classic source of reference.

All those who have watched him work so gently with, and talk to those majestic creatures, our honey bees, would recognise that Clive de Bruyn is the original “Bee whisperer”.

To conclude, and to correct any confusion, information about Clive de Bruyn's recent and premature call to a “Higher Place” is unfounded. In the words of Mark Twain: “*The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated*”. Ad Multos Annos.

Paul F Abbott BDS: Beekeeper & Photographer  
Chairman: Southend on Sea & District Division of EBKA.  
Member of Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Branch of the KBKA

## The Bee Brain

based on an article by Emery Dann, Samona BKA Topical News B

In spite of their small brain sizes (about one cubic millimetre), honey bees are very smart, with a remarkable ability to learn and recall things very quickly. Their brains are about 20,000 times less massive compared to human brains, and contain less than a million neurons, whilst our human brain has around 80 billion neurons. However, the honey bee brain is actually ten times denser compared to a mammal's brain. The honey bee brain has an oval shape and is about the size of one sesame seed. The brain is a very sophisticated sensory system which gives them excellent sight and smell abilities. Their small brains are able to make very complicated calculations on distances and optimise route plans for different locations.

How do honeybee brains compare to the fastest supercomputers we have today?

Our fastest computer can process one billion computations per second. A honey bee brain can process one trillion computations per second! But what is the contribution of instinct, pheromones and automatic behaviour? It is true that some bee behaviour is inflexible with instinct guiding their response. But scientists do not fully understand honey bee learning and decision making or what it is that triggers their responses. Bees learn from older bees how to do some hive jobs. They also use what they learn from experience to decide how to respond in the future. They utilise symbolic communication that is very close to human communication. Bees form some lifelong memories. They know how to conserve valuable energy by hanging almost motionless together in a swarm. They remember, organise their decisions, and process how many landmarks they pass during foraging flights.

Honey bees display fifty nine distinct behaviours that scientists have classified; which compares well with the widely recognised as highly intelligent dolphins, which have only about twice that many at one hundred and twenty three. One third of a honey bee brain is called Mushroom Body Neurons. This is largely undeveloped in a house or nurse bee and until the bee starts to forage. Then this brain area

develops rapidly and is used in critical memory storage. If the hive has a shortage of foragers, some of the nurse bees will switch jobs and become foragers. This job transition, whether triggered by age or social cues, involves changes in thousands of genes in the honey bee brain; some genes turn on and others turn off. It actually allows bees to learn and utilise additional brain power to perform very complex foraging tasks for nectar, pollen, water and propolis.

Bees must make flying decisions, weather condition decisions, visual, scent tracking and tactile decisions. They share perfect directions with their fellow workers, give and follow complex directions the first time, deal with bee enemies and unexpected, unfamiliar situations. Last of all, decide when to sacrifice their life for their colony! If foraging bees perceive a danger at the location they are foraging, and upon returning to the hive find another bee communicating that location in a 'waggle dance', the bee that knows that there is danger will give a 'stop signal' by buzzing at 380 vibrations/second and butting with it's head the waggle dancing bee who will immediately understand and stop dancing. No more bees will go to this location.

Their overall 'intelligence' benefits the colony. Decisions are made through learning and experience. The process where a swarm reaches consensus and selects their preferred new nesting site from the various reports of the 'scout' bees is a complex decision making process. Research in Australia has demonstrated that they can recognise different colours, and then use their memory of these colours to find and guide their way through a maze. Scientists are still discovering how honey bee brains works - the closer they look, the more amazed they become.



## **Clive de Bruyn**

There was a huge sigh of relief, far and wide, when the news of Clive's de Bruyn's demise was found to be untrue. We look forward to his future services to beekeeping.

Editor

*Photograph by David Blackwood  
of Clive at Apimondia, Kiev 2013*

# Bee Health Day Report

Jim McNeill

On the first real day of summer over 50 Essex beekeepers had a very interesting and full on day with Keith Morgan and his team of seasonal officers Peter Heath, Peter Folge and Sandra Gray.

Keith gave an opening speech about what's happening around at the moment, then we split into 3 groups and spoke about all the different treatments available, how to use them and when.

Peter Heath was in a side room with diseased comb - some only collected the day before with all the brood diseases to show the different stages so we should know what to look out for. We all put on aprons and gloves for that, and you can't beat seeing it close up and under supervision.

Sandra Gray and Peter Folge went out to the apiary to do the inspections. It's always good to see how they look at bees, they check the front of the hive first (how many of us do that), then using a little smoke open up the hive, shake most of the bees off every comb and then don't upset them. A bit sad for Derek Webber who very kindly let us use his bees - one colony has got Chronic Bee Paralysis so we all know the symptoms to look out for. This is one reason to look at the front of your hive.

I would like to thank Derek Webber for the use of his lovely apiary in the middle of an orchard and booking the hall and, of course, the bee inspectors for their time and experience.

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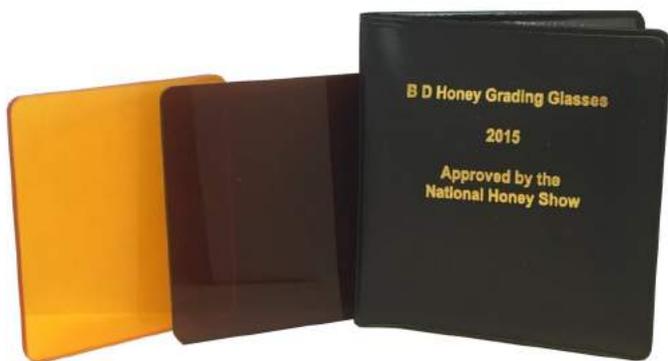
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