

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



**Who are these people?
Photograph is signed C A C Lees (?) Tiptree
Can you date it ?**

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

*Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex
Registered Charity number 1031419*

www.ebka.org

Issue No. 632

August 2017

Divisional Meetings Diary dates for August & September 2017

3 Aug	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	Divisional Honey Show - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow
19 Aug	Saturday	Epping Forest	'Extraction and the methods' - Chingford Horticultural Hall
20 Aug	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	Apiary Meeting - Stebbing/Great Saling area. Contact Jan French 07725 166 609 for details
21 Aug	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Label Design' with James Curtis. The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
23 Aug	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	'What makes bees tick?' (Glands, Hormones, Pheromones, sense organs , etc.) - Pam Hunter (Master Beekeeper & BBKA Examinations Officer) at WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED
24 Aug	Thursday 7.30pm	Colchester	'How was the season for you?' - Successes and Failures. Langham Community Centre, School Rd CO4 5PA
27 - 28 Aug	Sunday & Monday	Saffron Walden	Countess of Warwick's Show incl Divisional Honey Show. Little Easton. Great Dunmow CM6 2JJ
2 Sept	Saturday	County Event	Annual Honey Show at Orsett Showground, Grays RM16 3JU
7 Sept		Harlow	' Winter preparation' - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
7 Sept	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	'Mock Honey Show' with Helen Kingsford. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
16 Sept	Saturday 2.30pm	Saffron Walden	'Taster Session for Prospective beginners - Meadowfield, Thaxted Road, Wimbish CB10 2UY Enquiries info@swbka.org
18 Sept	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Honey Show' - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1
20 Sept	Wed 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Members meeting - Oak House, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PF
21 Sept		Epping Forest	'Winter Preparation & Varroa Control' - Chingford Horticultural Hall.
24 Sept	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	Apiary Meeting - White Notley, CM8 1RN
27 Sept	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	'Fun Quiz Evening' - WI Hall, Bellingham lane, Rayleigh, SS6 7ED
28 Sept		Colchester	'Are you ready for winter?' - Langham Community Centre, School Rd CO4 5PA

Please notify Jean by the 4th of each month of your meetings,

Jean Smye - jsmye@sky.com

The 130th EBKA Annual County Show
Saturday 2nd September 2017
Orsett Showground, Thurrock, Essex RM16 3JU

**Still time to prepare
your entries
for the Annual Show**

**Don't forget the two new
Classes**



Class 49 Beeswax Polish:

Any recipe containing beeswax may be used. Polish must be in a pot/jar designated for wax. Entry must comply with the legal labelling requirements for polish. The recipe to accompany the entry.

Class 52 Needlework:

Any medium may be used, silk, wool, cotton, ribbon, etc. to produce an artistic work depicting any connection with the life of the honeybee. A maximum size of A5 or, if circular, a maximum diameter of 180mm / 7 inches. The work may be framed or left on the loom/frame as you wish. Title permitted. The back of the work must be accessible for inspection. A detailed description of the item may be displayed after judging.

and A call for **Wax products**, etc. -

Blocks, candles, models, polish, other honey bee related items to sell on the 'Other products of the Hive' table.

Bring them in on the day.

EBKA 2017 Annual Conference

Hosted by Colchester Division

Saturday, 21ST October 2017, 9.30am – 4.30pm

Venue: Holiday Inn, Abbots Lane, Eight Ash Green, Colchester,
CO6 3QL (just off the A12)

'Future Challenges and Opportunities'

Our theme reflects the challenging times for beekeepers, and our speakers will discuss various aspects of these challenges. The speakers will include:

Dr Martin Bencsik

Martin works in the School of Science and Technology at Nottingham Trent University, and conducts research into automated beehive condition monitoring.

Mr Norman Carreck

Norman, who is well known to many beekeepers, is Science Director at International Bee Research Association. IBRA. His talk will be on *'Science and the Thinking Beekeeper'*.

Margaret Ginman

Margaret is the General Secretary of the Bee Farmers Association, and will discuss the Apprentice Scheme, European Experiences and Brexit implications.

Ticket Price £25, includes lunch.

Cheques payable to *'Essex Beekeepers' Association Colchester Division'*

Send with your contact details to The Treasurer, Crabtrees, Paynes Lane, Little Bromley, Manningtree, Essex, CO11 2PJ



There will also be trade stands and an excellent raffle



BBKA Long Service Certificates for beekeepers of 50 years and over

At the BBKA ADM in January each year, Associations are presented with certificates for those members who have been a beekeeper for 50 years or more.

The following members of EBKA have been awarded certificates since 2010.

2010	Sid Barker	Colchester
	Kenneth Laws	Colchester
	W M Morgan	Harlow
	Eric Fenner	Harlow
	B Solomons	Harlow
2011	Robert Pickford	Saffron Walden
	David Blackwood	Southend
2014	Roy Copley	
2015	Enid Ford	Romford
2016	Jill Solomons	Harlow
2017	Maurice Bacon	Braintree
	Stuart Mitson	Braintree
	Mick Lovell	Braintree
	Derek Clark	Braintree (70 years Certificate)

Secretaries of Divisions have been asked to check their records so that any requests for next year's BBKA ADM can be submitted later in the year.

Clive DeBruyn NDB opens Chelmsford's Divisional Apiary

Article & photographs by Paul F Abbott
Chairman of Southend on Sea & District Division



On the pleasant sunny midsummer evening of Monday 19th June 2017, Clive DeBruyn, Essex beekeeping expert and one-time County Beekeeping Instructor ceremoniously cut the ribbon to open Chelmsford's new Divisional Apiary at historic Hylands House.

It was right and fitting that the national beekeeping treasure that is Clive DeBruyn NDB should formally open the splendid new apiary in the grounds of this grade two listed building.

The apiary is sited in a secure secluded spot beneath the outer wall of the Victorian garden where the estate workers used to cultivate their own fruit and vegetables.

An eager congregation of suited Chelmsford and Essex beekeepers gathered together, banner unfurled, to witness this joyful apiaristical inaugural event.

*'joyful
apiaristical
inaugural
event'*



A cream tea reception within Hylands House immediately followed the opening, whereupon Clive delivered a dynamic general talk on beekeeping, of interest to both apiarists and public alike.

Clive DeBruyn recommended several books on beekeeping, particularly “*Guide to Bees and Honey*” by former Essex County Lecturer Ted Hooper MBE and the following:

- *Do the bees have enough **room!***
- *Is the **queen present** and laying the correct eggs?*
- *Is the colony **building up** as expected, and are there signs of queen cells?*
- *Is there any **disease**, which should be recorded and suitably treated?*
- *Does the colony have enough **stores**?*

These are the five questions to ask yourself upon opening a hive.

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Agent for E H Thorne and Northern Bee Books

Just before it rains, bees are extra busy.

Research which involved attaching RF trackers to three hundred individual honeybees to track their movements and behaviour, suggests bees are very good at detecting atmospheric changes, such as that of temperature, pressure and humidity that often come along just before changes in weather are likely to occur.

Just before a rainy day, honeybees were found to spend more time flying around outside the hive, looking for nectar and pollinating plants, but on days following rainfall, when it would be perfectly sunny outside, bees were a bit lazier and stayed around at the hive longer. On sunnier days, honeybees would spend less time outside the hive foraging, and would return to the hive earlier than they would on days just before it rained.

This behaviour also suggests honeybees are excellent preparers and know when to take advantage of flowers and food gathering before rain makes that difficult. While it is raining, they also use the time they have to process the resources they have just collected. In these ways, even when a long period of bad weather is due, honeybees try to ensure their survival.

Source: *Insect Science via New Scientist and Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA*

Honey Buckets

for sale

£2 each

Contact: David Tyler

Tel: **01279 730 228**

Email **tylersbees@hotmail.co.uk**



STARRY FLOWERS AND RICH NECTAR

Boraginaceae

Celia F. Davis - Warwickshire BKA (via eBees)

A look at a family which contains some of the most bee-attractive and productive flowers that we know.

Forget-me-not (*Myosotis spp*) is of course a very small flower but it is nonetheless of interest to us as beekeepers. Honey bees collect nectar from it and in doing so, also take on board a great deal of pollen. The mouth of the flower is very small so the pollen gets dislodged and covers the bee's mouthparts. It is quite unusual as it is so tiny, measuring only about 6 μm (average pollen size 20 – 30 μm) and shaped like a little dumb-bell. It is one of the smallest pollens we see in the UK and it is very widely distributed in honey. The flower is also interesting as it communicates with the bees in a visible manner, the middle yellow disc changing to white as the flower ages and ceases to produce nectar. In some species the whole flower may also change colour. This is a signal to pollinating insects that the flower has been pollinated and that their services are no longer required, and therefore there will be no nectar and this is a very common phenomenon in flowers, although the colour changes vary.

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)

A plant well-known to beekeepers as a major producer of honey where it is grown on a large scale; It is grown for its oil which is obtained from the seed and is high in gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and it benefits greatly from adequate insect pollination as this ensures a more even seed set, so maximising the crop. The fields are a beautiful blue and it produces copious nectar. Even after the crop has been cut, the severed stems continue to produce a rich sap which is collected by the bees. The honey is not, in my opinion, anything to write home about. It looks like water and does not have much flavour, but it is very slow to granulate if it is pure and is excellent for cut comb production and for mixing with other, more strongly-flavoured crops. It has a high sucrose content and is mentioned in the *Honey Regulations* as not more than 15g/100g of sucrose is permitted in borage honey compared to the maximum 5g/100g in other honeys.

It is frequently marketed as 'Starflower Honey' as the flowers do have the appearance of blue stars and the name appeals to the buying public. The pollen is almost white and collected easily from the pendant flowers. It is often grown in the garden where it self-seeds happily but is not a problem. It is worth the space to enjoy watching the bees feeding on it.

Viper's Bugloss and other *Echium* spp

Viper's Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*) is a plant which is patchy in its distribution. It likes light sandy or calcareous soils and I have seen quantities of it growing at Land's End, Lulworth Cove in Dorset and at the Dungeness Nature Reserve in Kent. It is a tall hairy plant with beautiful spikes of purple/blue flowers which are always covered with insects of various sorts. Members of this group, particularly *E. plantagineum* are now being grown commercially for their oils which are high in some of the essential fatty acids such as Omega-3 and Omega-6.

Phacelia tanacetifolia

One of my favourite plants. I grow it in the garden every year and advertise its value for pollinators everywhere I go. It is an annual, flowering about eight weeks after sowing, extremely easy to grow – just broadcast the seed and rake it in lightly – and in flower for a long period. It grows to about two feet in height and is rather floppy, so needs support. It will self-seed but is shallow rooted and so not a problem. All pollinating insects love it and honey bees collect nectar and pollen from it. The latter is blue, as are the flowers. They are produced in spirals, rather like a snail's shell, which open from the base and gradually uncurl. The seed is included in many mixtures for insects and has been used to attract hoverflies which then produce larvae to eat the aphids on adjacent crops.



Photo: Celia Davis
***Phacelia* flowers showing the long stamens which carry blue pollen**

Other species

The family includes the Lungworts (*Pulmonaria* spp).. These are excellent bumblebee plants but their flowers are too long to give access for honey bees. They are particularly valuable for bumblebee queens when they emerge in the spring. Comfrey (*Symphytum* spp) is quite invasive but can be kept under control and cut down two or three times a year to add to the compost heap or to soak to make a good liquid fertiliser.

The family as a whole is well worth investigating both for its beauty and its insect potential. Most of the members are hairy and have rough stems, although *Phacelia* is quite smooth. Flowers in some species may be pink or white sometimes, but blue is the predominant colour.

What Rev. Gilbert White heard?

On 28th June 1792 - 225 years ago - the Rev Gilbert White, a pioneering English naturalist living in Selborne, Hampshire, heard a mysterious sound which he documented:

“Humming in the Air

There is a natural occurrence to be met with upon the highest part of our down in hot summer days, which always amuses me much, without giving me any satisfaction with respect to the cause of it; and that is a loud audible humming of bees in the air, though not one insect is to be seen. This sound is to be heard distinctly the whole common through, from the Moneydells to Mr White’s avenue gate. Any person would suppose that a large swarm of bees was in motion, and playing about over his head. This noise was heard last week on June 28th.

From *The Natural History of Selborne* by Rev Gilbert White (1720 - 1793) published in 1789.

Gilbert White did not know what it was, but we now realise that it was almost certainly the sound of a Drone Congregation Area (DCA) -where male honey bees go to mate on the wing with Queens. No one can satisfactorily define the characteristics of these special areas, but they can persist year after year - seemingly century after century as today 225 years later, Sheep Down on Selborne Common (now owned by the National Trust) is still a Drone Congregation Area.

[This story featured on Paddy O’Connell’s Slow Radio feature on BBC Radio 4 on 25 June 2017.]

Courtesy of Vita-Europe blog

LATEST NEWS ON NEONICOTINOIDS:

Article by Sam Wong in New Scientist - 3 July 2017.

See <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2139197-strongest-evidence-yet-that-neonicotinoids-are-killing-bees>

International Meeting of Young Beekeepers on BBC Countryfile



The International Meeting of Young Beekeepers (IMYB) at Marlborough College in Wiltshire was filmed by the team at BBC Countryfile. It's the first time the competition has been held in England and was part of a programme devoted to the wonderful county of Wiltshire.



A five person BBC team arrived on the field where the meeting apiary was set up early on Friday 7th July. Presenter Anita Rani met the England Team Manager, Serena Watts, and our 3 competitors, May Smith, Younis Bashir and Sarah Bush. They competed in mixed teams with youngsters from 18 other countries that included India, Lebanon and Russia.

Sequences were shot with the whole crew suited up with the exception of a very calm sound man. The tests with live bees included making a nuc, marking drones, checking bees for diseases and grafting larvae for Queen rearing. Students also did classroom based stuff like working out which flower bees had collected nectar from by tasting honey, making frames and an anatomy quiz. Skep making was also featured.

Simon Cavill, BBKA Trustee and England Team Manager, said: "The event was a fantastic success which drew universal praise from the participants of the 19 countries including Russia and India. In fact, it was rated as the "best ever" by Dr Juri Piza who created the event in 2010. Marlborough College and their facilities were immaculate and their staff could not have been more helpful."

The Wiltshire edition of BBC Countryfile went out on Sunday 23rd of July.

**Saffron Walden
BKA**

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are organising

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&
Bee Breeders
Association
[BIBBA]**

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15Kg Thornes Rectank with valve, 4 honey buckets with lids, stainless steel double slide honey strainer, 350+ granulation and mixed tamper evident labels - £30

Janet Chipperfield - 0208 5176 118 (Dagenham)

Did you know? Bees can detect electric fields.

Professor Daniel Roberts of Bristol University has proved that bees can detect these fields but the usefulness to bees of this ability is not fully understood. As bees fly they gather a positive electric charge because of the slight ionisation of the atmosphere, particularly when it is dry. This charge is quite low, probably about 100 volts.

As a bee approaches a flower, normally earthed through the water rich stem, the difference in potential, over say five or so centimetres, sets up an electric field detectable to the bee.

Professor Roberts suggests that if a bee actually alighted on part of a flower, say the pollen source, some charge would transfer to the flower part. The resulting raised potential may last some time so that a second bee approaching the same pollen source soon after would experience a smaller difference of potential and therefore less of an electric field.



Thus bees could use this ability to save time and precious energy as they would be able to know before landing on the flower whether it had already been visited in the recent past.

Peter Carden

Beekeepers Association of the ACT (*Australian Capital Territory*) via ebees

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