

West Sussex Beekeepers' Association Annual Convention – 23rd February 2019

Speakers' Profiles

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention has again attracted top speakers to cover a wide range of topics throughout the day. As well as the main lectures, you can attend two additional seminars on different subjects. Please indicate your choices in order of preference as spaces on some seminars will be limited. We will, of course, do our very best to meet your individual wishes. **Please apply as soon as possible to have the best chance of attending your preferred seminars.** We hope there will be plenty to interest you.

Clive de Bruyn

Clive has been a beekeeper since the 1960s. Since then he has been an amateur, commercial and professional beekeeper, managing bees in 11 English counties. He gained a National Diploma in Beekeeping in 1976 and soon afterwards joined the National Beekeeping Unit where he rose to be second in command, in charge of bee diseases. He then worked for Honey Farmers Ltd as their queen raiser and trouble shooter and during this time was seconded to the Jamaican government to rear queens. For 15 years he was the County Beekeeping Instructor for Essex and his indispensable book "Practical Beekeeping" was released in 1987.

Clive has experience of beekeeping in Africa and S. America with 'Africanised bees' and has visited China, India, Thailand and Japan looking at other Apis species. In 1996 he spent two months working with Australian beekeepers and in 2011 carried out a survey of 13 countries in the Caribbean for their beekeeping potential. He is one of the best-known and respected beekeeping authorities in Britain and beyond. Clive's approach to talks is very practical and interactive with lots of props and equipment. He will be presenting a main lecture on 'The Joys of Raising Queens' and a seminar on 'Beekeeping Mistakes'.

Dr. Martin Bencsik

Martin is an Associate Professor in Physics at Nottingham Trent University. His research focuses on novel applications of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and more recently on bioacoustics, including honeybee colony condition monitoring. His use of accelerometers to measure vibrations in honeybee hives led him to become involved in The Hive artwork at Kew, supplying the measurement technology and software which animates the work. The Hive is a unique, multi-sensory experience designed to highlight the extraordinary life of bees. The technology has revealed some fascinating insights, particularly around swarming prediction, regular changes in honeycomb density due to the brood cycle, the detection of individual honeybee pulsed vibrations, and long-term statistics on two honeybee signals of major importance, the whooping and the DVAV signals.

Martin is proactively applying for further funding for research work on honeybee monitoring and feels passionate about directing his work towards helping bees and the environment. Martin will share his most recent findings during his lecture 'Monitoring honey bee colony activity with accelerometer sensors'.

Adam Leitch NDB

Adam is a member of the Reigate Beekeepers Association, Master Beekeeper and Vice-Chairman of the NDB Examination Board. Adam passed his NDB exam in 2015, having already obtained his BBKA Master Beekeeper and Microscopy Certificate. He is an examiner for the BBKA (Basic & General Husbandry), a correspondence course tutor for BBKA module students and has been writing a series of articles about pollen identification for BBKA news. He teaches practical beekeeping at Reigate Beekeepers club apiary at a range of levels and also gives talks to beekeeping groups on all aspects of beekeeping, including botany and anatomy. He provides support to study groups and (when time allows!) runs evening classes on Modules and General Husbandry.

Adam has been working closely with Research Fellows at the University of Brighton with whom he has been studying pollen. His lecture 'Melissopalynology – The Study of Pollen in Honey' will give us an insight into why pollen is so important, how we use it to find out where our bees have been foraging and what the important nectar sources are. Adam will also be running a seminar, 'Asian Hornet Update', an important subject for beekeepers at the moment.

Chris Park

Chris lives on an organic farm in the Vale of the White Horse in south Oxfordshire. He keeps bees there in an array of different styles from log-hives to Langstroths and most things in between. You can see some of his work on www.acorneducation.com. You'll see that it is wide ranging – from nature awareness to coracle building, bronze/iron age construction to arts and crafts, music and storytelling (to mention a few). He works with schools, wildlife trusts, local authorities, mental health projects, special interest groups, communities, families and more - always aiming to strengthen our connections to the natural environment and to each other, building knowledge, skills and community, whilst enabling us to gain a greater awareness of our roots and culture, deepening one's sense of place, identity and wellbeing.

He has worked with the BBC on a project called 'Surviving the Iron Age' which followed 17 volunteers living as Iron Age Celts. Over 6 weeks of a wet Welsh autumn, they had to maintain their settlement just as the Celts did 2000 years ago. Chris was the 'Druid' of the settlement, and has been an active member of the Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids for over 20 years.

Chris is currently the chairman of the Beekeeping History Trust. He researches beekeeping heritage, folklore and history, teaches skep making and lectures to beekeeping associations. At our Convention, Chris will be running two seminars 'Experiments in Skep Beekeeping' and 'Mead, Metheglin & Medicine'.

Celia Perry

Celia first became interested in honey bees as a child after viewing beekeeping demonstrations at the Surrey County Show. However, it wasn't until many years later that she joined Reigate Beekeepers Association where she is an active member. For several years she has been the Show Bench Secretary for the Reigate Beekeepers annual honey show which regularly attracts well in excess of 100 entries.

In presenting the workshop on 'BBKA Examination System & what you can get out of it', Celia will be using the experience and knowledge she has gained from going through the exam system herself. As a candidate she took all the written modules and three practical assessments, as a result of which she achieved the qualification of Master Beekeeper. She is the local Examination Secretary for Surrey Beekeepers Association and has been appointed as an assessor for all practical assessments from the Basic Assessment up to Advanced Husbandry. She has set and marked the written modules examinations and in the last month completed a three year term of office on the BBKA Examinations Board, so has definitely seen the examination system from most sides. Exams can appear daunting at first glance but are a great way to improve our understanding of how to work with our bees to get good results. Celia will explain the exam pathways and benefits and hopefully inspire you to consider taking up the challenge! Exams aren't for everyone but even those who don't want to take an exam can improve their knowledge and beekeeping skills by following the exam syllabus.

James Donaldson

James started keeping bees around 14 years ago but began to take his hobby more seriously in around 2010. He passed the Basic in 2011 and during every year since then he's either taken, or has prepared for (but usually both), bee exams or assessments. So far, he holds the BBKA's Microscopy, General Husbandry and Advanced Theory Certificates. He's also a tutor on the BBKA's correspondence courses for the Basic and the Modular Theory exams (or Bee-Levels, as he calls them).

James is an advocate for beekeeper education and believes that being well informed, and open to new ideas, is a great complement to experience. This helps individuals to better understand their bees' behaviour which makes for better beekeepers and their beekeeping more enjoyable (and slightly less perplexing).

James is the Secretary of Fleet & District Beekeepers' Association and is the Chairman of Hampshire Beekeepers' Association. He teaches beekeeping to beginners, and mentors improvers through the Basic. He is planning to teach and prepare candidates for the new Bee Health Certificate. James will present a seminar on 'Wings, Stings and other things under the microscope' at the Convention and describe some of the anatomy and structures that make bees work. He will illustrate this by giving a practical demonstration, using his microscopy skills, to display some of the bee's internal organs under a microscope. The image James sees will be projected onto a screen for the audience to watch as he works. This seminar will provide a rare opportunity for beekeepers to see and discuss what's inside a bee.