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## THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Stuart Anderson (Inventor of the Flow Super) with some Southend members at the Epping Forest demonstration on 1st May

Report on page 7

Photograph by Paul F Abbott

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

Issue No. 630

June 2017

Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex  
Registered Charity number 1031419  
[www.ebka.org](http://www.ebka.org)

## Divisional Meetings Diary dates for June & July 2017

1 June	Thursday 7.30	Harlow	tba
1 June	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	<b>Swarm collecting experiences.</b> Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
4 June	Sunday 2.30pm	Saffron Walden	<b>Garden Party</b> - Lower House Farm, Water lane, Radwinter CB10 2TX
15 June	9.30 - 5pm	County Event	<b>Bee Health &amp; Disease Recognition</b> - Copped Hall, Epping CM15 5HS
17 June	Saturday	Epping Forest	<b>Barrier management and the need for cleanliness in the apiary</b> - Caroline Washington (SBI Ret'd)
19 June	Monday 7.00pm	Chelmsford	<b>Apiary meeting</b> at Hylands Park with Clive deBruyn
21 June	Wed 6.00pm	Dengie 100	<b>Apiary visit</b> - Carters - Marking Queens.
22 June	Thursday 7.30pm	Colchester	<b>'The Flow hive - experience after 2 years'</b> . Rita Wilson, Langham Community Centre, School Road CO4 5PA
25 June	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	<b>Apiary meeting and Guided tour of Layer Marney Tower</b> CO5 9US
27 June	Tuesday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	<b>'Drone Congregation Areas'</b> - Clive deBruyn. Thaxted Day Centre, Vicarage Lane CM6 2RL
28 June	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	tba
4 July	Tuesday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	<b>Preparing for Winter.</b> Thaxted Day Centre, Vicarage lane, CM6 2RL
6 July	Thursday 8.00pm	Harlow	tbc
17 July	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	<b>'Farms and bees'</b> , The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
19 July	Wed 6.00pm	Dengie 100	<b>Apiary visit</b> - Arcadia Apiary Pests and diseases.
23 July	Saturday 2.30pm	Saffron Walden	<b>'Bee Photography'</b> Taking better photographs of bees (or anything else) with your 'phone, compact, or SLR. Tudhope Farm, Whiteditch Lane, Newport CB11 3UD
26 July	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	Tbc
30 July	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	<b>Apiary meeting</b> - Crossing CM77 8DY

Please notify Jean by the 4th of each month of your meetings, [Jean Smye - jsmye@sky.com](mailto:Jean.Smye-jsmye@sky.com)

## Who's who and how to contact them

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## The 130th EBKA Annual County Show

Saturday 2nd September 2017

Orsett Showground, Thurrock, Essex RM16 3JU

Our 2017 Show will take place at the Orsett Show. Set in 30 acres in the village of Orsett, this show is their 111th and is a one-day show.

The organisers (*Orsett Horticultural and Agricultural Society*) are a registered charity run mainly by volunteers, their aim being to promote countryside matters and they support the *Have a Heart* charity and *St. Luke's Hospice*.

At the show there will be marquees featuring Horticulture, Agriculture, Hobbies and Handicrafts and over 150 Trade Stands.

EBKA show schedules will be issued with the August edition of *The Essex Beekeeper*.

## EBKA 2017 Annual Conference

Hosted by Colchester Division

Saturday, 21<sup>ST</sup> October 2017, 9.30am – 4.30pm

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



**Ticket price £25**

**includes lunch.**

Cheques payable to -

*'Essex Beekeepers' Association  
Colchester Division'*

Send with your contact details to:

The Treasurer  
Crabtrees, Payne Lane,  
Little Bromley, Manningtree  
Essex CO11 2PJ

## Bee Health and Disease Recognition Day

Copped Hall  
Epping  
Essex  
CM16 5HS  
on  
**Thursday  
15th June 2017**

9.30am to 5pm

### A bit of History .....

The **National Bee Unit** was set up in the early 1950's. It is now part of The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). The unit runs programmes of research and development, which underpins the National Bee Unit's work and feeds back through advice to the beekeeping industry and the policy divisions in England and Wales.

It runs **BeeBase**, a website designed to help monitor and control the spread of serious honeybee pests and diseases. We must not forget that hobbyist beekeepers only make up a small percentage of bee stocks in the UK. The role of the National Bee Unit is fundamentally to protect the honeybee as it is an essential pollinator of crops and wild plants. The threats to the honeybee, besides weather and climate change, are serious endemic pests and diseases that can be managed.

A world without the honeybee would have a massive impact ecologically and economically. The policy of how the NBU minimises risk and controls disease is fundamental to the UK. For example, we do not use antibiotic treatment here except on special occasions to treat EFB and culling for AFB.

### How is this Achieved?

Namely by inspecting, advising and educating, scrutinizing the importation of bees and monitoring hives in strategic transport locations for non-native species and exotic pests should an incursion occur.

So, having booked your place on the **Bee Health and Disease Recognition Day** on 15 June you are set to have a very revealing and informative time.

Ian Nichols—CEC Chair

## The Second Annual Ted Hooper Lecture – Great Theatre!

Report by Ian Nichols & Michael Webb

On a warm sunny afternoon in early April over ninety beekeepers and one local arable farmer met at the delightful venue of The Coach House on the Marks Hall Estate at Coggeshall for an event which one member compared with a visit to the West End theatre. She remarked that “for the very reasonable admission price of £8, we were treated to a bravado performance from two excellent speakers”.

Continuing with that analogy, during the first act we were entertained by **Professor Dave Goulson** from Life Sciences, Sussex University who painted a very disturbing and somewhat bleak picture of the future for bees and, in fact, all pollinators in his talk entitled “*Bees, Pesticides and Politics*”.



Dave began by looking back at the neonicotinoid moratorium of 2013 with an EU wide ban supported by the majority of EU States which did not include the UK Government at the time, the NFU and agrochemical industry.

His approach however was to examine the scientific evidence on all types of bee. He graphically illustrated the reduced choice of

produce we could expect without bees and showed the decline in the bumble bee population not only in the UK but also in the USA. The evidence suggested the causes of the decline were due to habitat loss, parasites/disease and pesticides.

Dave depressed the audience further with pictures of how intensive farming methods had led to a dramatic decline in wild flower meadows.

Around 90% of this required brood area is constructed within six weeks. This requires 9 - 11 kg of honey which is equivalent to around a third of a colony's total winter stores.

The survival rates for swarms are not high, only one in four generally survive (and the rate is much lower for cast swarms because they are much smaller and don't have the necessary reserves to build the initial comb).

The survival of a swarm is highly weather dependant, and particularly dependant on their ability to forage enough to be able to build the required comb, and of course requires that they have made a good decision about their new nest location.

Saffron Walden  
BKA

with the

Bee Improvement  
&  
Bee Breeders  
Association  
(BIBBA)

are organising

***Bee Improvement for All***

with **Roger Patterson**

**Saturday 18 November 2017**

9 am to 4.30 pm

***More details and booking information  
for this event  
will be available soon.***

Sewards End  
Village Hall,  
Sewards End,  
Saffron Walden  
CB10 2LG



They return to the original hive and dance to give information about the possible new nest, and to recruit supporters for this new location. Their dance tells the other bees where the new nest is located, how far away and in what direction, and describes the cavity. The decision about a new nest location may take up to four days, and may not have been finalised when the swarm leaves the hive. The swarm tends to go through a few different phases whilst it finds a new home. The

queen is often forced out of the hive by the workers, who guide her to an appropriate local resting place such as a nearby fence post, tree or hedge. The workers and drones follow the pheromones of the queen and the swarm undergoes a period of settling with more bees joining from the original colony. Lots of bees will be flying for some time while the swarm clusters around the queen.

After the prime swarm has left the hive, further departures of bees may occur, and these are known as 'Casts'. They involve a virgin queen, unlike a prime swarm which involves the original old queen. Following a prime swarm brood development continues, and the sealed queen cells start to hatch in around 5 - 6 days. The workers keep emerging queens in their cells, but after the first virgin is released she may depart with a cast after 2 - 4 days.

Further virgin queens can also depart with more casts, and this may continue until the colony is totally depleted, down to 10 - 25% of the number of bees it originally started with.

Swarm days	Bee Activity
0	Prime swarm departs
+ 5	Virgin Queen in cells
+ 5	First Virgin Queen emerges
+ 5	Workers delay further Queens emerging
+ 8	Cast swarm may depart
+ 8	Another Virgin queen emerges
+ 8	Virgin attacks Queen cells
	Workers tear down Queen cells
+ 11 to + 20	Virgin leaves on Mating Flight
+ 26	Mated Queen starts laying

The table opposite shows the activities that occur after a prime swarm. The days in the table are average time scales only, and the later activities are subject to greater variance in timing.

Cast swarms may of course not occur at all. When a prime swarm leaves to fly to a new nest it carries enough reserves to build 800 sq. cm of comb area, which is about 3% of the total brood area required.

Turning to pesticides, he illustrated the 22 chemicals that the agrochemical industry had applied to an oil rape seed field in East Sussex during the year 2012/13. He also highlighted the neonicotinoids mainly used in 2010 as seed dressing on rape (canola), cereals, maize, sunflower and beet.

In summarising, Dave highlighted the routes of exposure for bees was through arable and horticultural crops, field margin flowers and garden and amenity areas. The results of the scientific study in 2012 showed that when bumblebee nests near a rape seed field were fed differing doses of neonicotinoids, the decline in the number of queens produced was dramatic when fed high doses.

With a flow chart showing how a combination of continual use of levels of fungicides and pesticides and with a reduced alternative forage, it was certainly not good news for the future of our bees.

When challenged by the local farmer, Dave did agree that claims by those advocating reduced use of pesticides require the qualification of scientific examination. He did however question whether the current approach to farming was the only way to feed the world?

After a much needed intermission for a tea or coffee and biscuits, it was also an opportunity to meet friends and discuss the presentation where many had found the message somewhat depressing.

However like every good dramatic performance, the second act, was a refreshing talk by **Darren Lerigo**, a local horticulturalist whose winning smile and presentation restored the equilibrium. Darren, who is a director of Modern Mint Ltd, gave an engaging talk on the plants and flowers during the seasons which are considered as "bee friendly". Darren was impressed by the level of knowledge of the audience as they could name the plants, sometimes including their Latin name, when he highlighted the best exhibits for planting to help



our pollinators. However, there was one shrub that Darren recommended that his audience could not name. That plant was Phillyrea and Darren was able to quote from a John Worlidge, who in 1676, reported:-

*“above any tree, the bees most affect the phillyrea; one sort of them beareth in those months (spring) an abundance of greenish blossoms, which yield great plenty of of gummy rosinny sweat, which the bees daily transport to their hives .... nothing can be more acceptable to your bees than a hedge of this tree about your apiary.”*

At the end of Darren’s talk there were smiles all round with the audience very enthusiastically asking questions.

The afternoon ended with many purchasing Dave Goulson’s books and Darren Lerigo’s garden products. Penny Learmonth sold EBKA branded items and Ted Hooper books on *Beekeeping for Beginners* and the *Bee Friendly Garden*. Roy Cropley also did a good trade in foundation wax.

The most rewarding comments about this year’s lecture were the questions asked about who we should have as our speakers at next year’s **Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture**. If you have any suggestions for future speakers at this annual County wide event, please contact Ian Nichols.

*Photographs by Pat Allen*

Footnote:

**PHILLYREA**



Commonly known as Jasmine Box.

Phillyrea angustifolia - small fragrant creamy yellow flowers on a dense bushy shrub. Narrow leaves

Phillyrea latifolia - Scented yellow-green flowers followed by black fruits in the autumn. Broad leaves.

Member of the Olive family, sometimes known as evergreen privet.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR JARS**

If you have ordered jars for collection at

**Forest Lodge Turkey Farm, Stock Road, Stock, Nr Chelmsford, Essex**

**CM4 9QY**

Friday 16th or Saturday 17th June. 10am to 4.30pm

## Countdown to a Swarm!

*This article is reproduced courtesy of Reigate Beekeepers Association via ebees. The original article was inspired by and based on a Surrey BKA talk by Dan Basterfield.*

We are now in the ‘swarming season’, and we as beekeepers need to be prepared. But our bees have also been preparing - perhaps to swarm. So what is their countdown to a swarm ?

Swarm Days	Bee Activity
-28 to -14	Queen Cups Built in Quantity
-28 to -14	Queen Feeding Increased
Laying Rate Increases	
-10	Egg Laid in Cup
-10	Workers gorge on Honey
-7	Queen Feeding Reduced
Laying Rate Reduces	
-5	Workers Rest in Hive
-3	Scouting Begins
-3	Queen Treated Roughly
-1	Queen Cell Sealed
0	Buzzing Runs
0	Prime Swarm Departs
0	Swarm Clusters (often nearby)
0	Some 'Returners' to the Hive
0 to ?	Swarm Collectors Arrive !!!

The days in the table are average time scales only, and the earlier activities are subject to greater variance in timing.

But they do indicate that a lot of activity is taking place within the hive, and for a long time before the swarm emerges from the hive.

A prime swarm usually means that around 60% of the adult population of the hive leaves, possibly up to 30,000 bees - and of these bees, 70% may be under nine days old.

This departure of a large majority of the bees has a significant effect on the colony throughout the year.

Scouting for a new nest location starts around three days before the swarm emerges. Older bees abandon their foraging duties and begin scouting. A likely cavity location is inspected for up to an hour. Initially the bee spends around a minute inside the cavity, alternating with trips outside. They scramble all over the inside, walking all the surfaces, measuring the size of the cavity as they successively venture further inside. When inspecting the outside of the cavity they make scurrying and slow flights around, sometimes landing and walking on the outside surface.



Araucaria Flow Classic UK  
National sized Super

It is tempting to believe that the Flow Hive will eradicate this issue of weights and boxes and sweat and struggle, but while that proposition may prove valid (if expensive), it is fair to conclude that a good crop for both bees and beekeeper is no less dependent on the beekeeper's ability to manage strong colonies, avoid losing swarms, and dream of fine weather. In that respect, as far as I can see, not much in beekeeping will change.

<https://eu.honeyflow.com/collections/all-products/products/flow-super-uk-national-pine>

**Eric Beaumont - Epping Forest Division**

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**May Day 2017:  
Epping Forest  
Beekeepers  
welcome  
Stuart Anderson,  
inventor of the  
Flow Hive to  
Essex:**

Article plus photographs by Paul F Abbott

On Bank Holiday Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May a conglomeration of buzzing Beekeepers gathered at Epping Forest's scenic Divisional out-apiary for a dynamic talk and demonstration of the newly available UK National Super version of the Flow Hive.

They travelled eagerly from London, Essex and beyond. This was part of a three-month promotional European Tour by inventor Stuart Anderson.

The Australian co-inventor of the Flow Hive Stuart, who collaborated with his son Cedar Anderson to produce the original concept, gave the presentation. He spoke passionately about environmental issues, and with grateful thanks to the many people throughout the World who had crowd-funded this unique apiaristical development project.

Stuart said "A Flow Hive is our term for a standard beehive that has Flow frames in the honey storage part (super). A honeybee hive is usually made up of the brood box where the queen bee lays eggs, and the 'supers' with honeycomb for the storage of honey. A 'Flow Super' is a beehive box using Flow Frames that the bees store honey in. A Flow Hive allows you to harvest the honey by simply turning a handle which causes the plastic hexagons of the Frame to split, allowing the ripe liquid honey to flow down tubes through the collecting trough and into your jar. Flow frames are partially built honeycomb which the bees complete, fill with honey and cap with wax. They are made in Australia from high quality food grade plastic. With their clear end-frame view, beekeepers can easily see when the honey cells have been capped and when the honey is ready for harvest. A refractometer should be used to check the water content of the honey."

Until recently, the Flow Hive was only available as a complete beehive kit, based on the Langstroth pattern and dimensions. This hive is not popular in the UK, and hive parts are not interchangeable with British hives.



Stuart and Cedar Anderson are now producing a UK NATIONAL FLOW HIVE SUPER which is compatible with the UK National and Commercial sized hives. This innovation makes the cost much more attractive to British beekeepers, since the SUPER will fit above a standard brood box and queen excluder.

As with all beekeeping activity, success with the Flow Hive is dependent on sound husbandry, seasonal timing, disease control,

and an awareness of what is going on in the brood chamber. It is not a recipe for 'leave alone' beekeeping, but sound and skilful colony management.

Stuart Anderson spoke enthusiastically about the Flow Hive to the enchanted retinue of attentive Essex apiarists, and answered many searching questions in a frank and honest way. The demonstration enlightened this May Day Bank Holiday morning. It really was the Bees Knees.

As optimistic beekeepers, we live in expectant anticipation that this year's bumper honey flow shall help to fill all recently purchased UK NATIONAL FLOW HIVE SUPERS! Bring it on!

More information at : [www.eu.honeyflow.com](http://www.eu.honeyflow.com)

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## Boxing clever - The Flow Hive

On a sunny Sunday in Wanstead three EBKA beekeepers with too much chat, several doubtful screwdrivers (but six very good hot-cross buns) met to assemble the new **National super from Flow Hive**, the Australian company which aims to change the perception of our craft and engage with the wider world.

Will this invention alter the attitude and practice of the average beekeeper? At a price in the region of £450 the twilight of the traditional method of adding boxes is not even on the horizon, but it raises the question: how does a beekeeper arrive at a workable method of managing stored honey, and what exactly is a super?

Standard procedure recommends the addition of space above when the brood box contains about eight frames of bees (note that I say 'about') and to add sequentially in advance of colony needs. This method answers well, sometimes or often and even usually, but I remember when first using the technique how easy it is to over-indulge: eager to keep ahead of the bees, I added too rapidly all season and ended with six boxes half-full.

The lesson I learned was that it is better to over-super until mid-season and under-super once the main flow begins. This method gives early space which helps to reduce the swarming impulse, but later reduction ensures combs are filled fully.

We can at this time of year use a commercial beekeeper's trick and add two boxes straight away, because experience has taught that it is the easiest response to early expansion and a good spring nectar flow, both of which are likely to limit laying space and lead to the inevitable arrival of queen cells.

This method has a drawback - erratic weather may bring winter in April and the empty space above may cause the colony to struggle to retain nest heat, and so delay development. The solution is to put a sheet of newspaper between each box - heat is retained and the bees will move up when necessary.

What is a super? Abandon the catalogue description because any box may be used (indeed, any box may be used for brood) and size will be determined by the beekeeper's ability to lift weight: a vast Dadant will require a fork-lift, a National brood box full of honey may weigh fifty pounds, and a Rose hive - a hive which uses one size of box throughout - almost as much. At the other end of the scale twin half-supers may be made which will ease the load readily, and those unable to lift much may resort to removing frames individually.