

THE ESSEX BEEKEEPER



Roger Patterson with Barbara Sharp (Colchester Division) and Nell at
'Bee Improvement for All' day - report on page 10

Photograph by Paul F Abbott

Monthly Magazine of the Essex Beekeepers' Association

Issue No. 627

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*Furthering the Craft of Beekeeping in Essex
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Divisional Meetings Diary dates for March & April 2017

2 March	Thursday 7.30pm	Harlow	Tba Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
2 March	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	'Swarm Control' - Pat Allen. Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
15 March	Wed 7.30pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	Eric Beaumont - The Oakhouse, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PR
16 March	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	'Queen finding and Swarm Control' - Chingford Horticultural Hall
18 March	Saturday 2.00pm	County Event	County AGM - Room EO6 at Writtle College, Lordship Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 3RP
20 March	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Question Panel' - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
21 March	Tuesday 7.30pm	Saffron Walden	'From Wax to Candle' - Richard Ridler. Swards End Village Hall, Radwinter Rd, Swards End CB10 2LG
22 March	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	'How to Shine with your Beeswax' - Jean Smye. WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED
24 March	Friday 8.00pm	Braintree	'Swarm Collection and Rehiving' - Stuart Mitson & Sam Pilgrim - Constitutional Club, Braintree CM7 1TY
2 April	Sunday 2.00pm	County Event	Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture - Coach House, Marks Hall, Coggeshall CO6 1TG - see opposite page
6 April	Thursday 7.30pm	Harlow	Tba - Kings Church, Red Willow, Harlow CM19 5PA
6 April	Thursday 8.00pm	Romford	'Candlemaking' - Jim Mcneill Chadwick Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park RM2 5EL
10 April	Monday 7.30pm	Chelmsford	'Swarm Control' - The Link, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB
19 April	Wed 6.00pm	Dengie 100 & Maldon	The Oakhouse, High Street, Maldon CM9 5PR
20 April	Thursday 7.30pm	Epping Forest	'Film Night' - Chingford Horticultural Hall
23 April	Sunday 3.00pm	Braintree	Apiary Meeting - Coney Green, Great Bardfield, CM7 4PY
26 April	Wed 7.30pm	Southend	'Swarm Collecting' - Pat Holden + Video 'The Ghosts of the Hive' WI Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh SS6 7ED

NOTE TO ALL DIVISIONAL SECRETARIES

Please notify Jean by the 4th of each month of your meetings, Jean Smye - jsmye@sky.com

Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture

at 2pm on Sunday 2 April 2017 at

The Coach House, Marks Hall, Coggeshall CO6 1TG

Following the success of last year inaugural event, this year our speakers are -

Professor Dave Goulson, founder of the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust, and

Darren Lerigo, a local horticulturalist and gardener with a true love of plants and interest in how the landscape affects the way we live.



Dave Goulson is interested in pollinators and pollination more generally, and particularly in the sustainable management of pollinators in agro-ecosystems. In recent years he has been heavily involved in studies of the impact of pesticides on bumblebees. His group is heavily involved in various “Citizen Science” projects to engage large numbers of people in conservation and in science more generally.

A former award-winning playwright, radio scriptwriter and stand-up comedian, **Darren Lerigo** was mentored at Kew Gardens. He has spoken around Essex to different groups and was a guest speaker at last year’s National Flower Show. He is keen to continue sharing his love of gardening and plants and will wish to bring that enthusiasm to the local beekeeping community.



This is the second Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture which is an important event in the beekeeping calendar. Members will again have the opportunity to hear the presentations from key speakers on topics that are of interest and relevance today. It is also a good opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet in the convivial surroundings of Marks Hall.

The ticket price, including refreshments, has been held at £8 and must be purchased in advance. Go to the Ted Hooper Lecture page on the EBKA Website and book your place now either online or by requesting a paper form.

Extract from a message from the National Bee Unit

[Sent to Beekeeping Associations in Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Herefordshire and South Wales]

Dear Beekeeper,

As you are aware, *Vespa velutina nigrothorax*, the yellow-legged hornet (aka the Asian hornet) was found in the UK last season. The first European incursion of this hornet was reported in France in 2004. The Asian hornet has since spread around 80 - 100 km per year, invading Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany and Belgium.

Adult hornets are voracious predators of honeybees and other beneficial insects, resulting in colony losses in France. In September 2016, foraging Asian hornets were reported near Tetbury in Gloucestershire, and a trapped individual was reported from Somerset. The nest near Tetbury was found and destroyed by National Bee Unit Inspectors and members of the Wildlife Team in the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Despite extensive field inspections, no further foraging Asian hornets were sighted in Somerset. Whilst this is good news, the ability of the Asian hornet to spread rapidly means that we must remain vigilant and aware of any possible activity across a wide area and with spring fast approaching, there is an opportunity for us all to monitor and trap any potential foundress queens.

In spring, surviving *V. velutina* queens begin a small primary nest, often in a sheltered location such as in the eaves of a roof or in a garden shed. Here they raise the first clutch of workers who take over the queen's foraging duties. At this stage the nest grows quickly, and the hornets often move to establish a secondary nest where there is more space to expand. These nests can become very large, and are often located high up in the tree canopy, close to a food source such as apiaries, (see images on BeeBase for further details).

From late September to October, the mature nest produces males and then virgin queens, which mate and disperse. However, the beginning of this stage of nest reproduction can vary, depending on climatic conditions. In France, a single mature nest produces on average 11 foundress queens after taking into account overwintering mortality of the potentially hundreds of queens that first disperse in autumn.

In the spring, Asian hornets can be trapped by using either commercial traps, which are available off the shelf or a home-made model e.g. by using the NBU modified hornet monitoring trap. If we know they are present in an area we can take action quickly to prevent populations expanding.

Editor's Note: Are we ready?

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT TRAINING DAY

Sunday 14th May 2017

Great Easton (nr. Great Dunmow)



Open to EBKA Members looking to take the BBKA Basic Assessment

If you've been keeping bees for a couple of years (or a lot longer) and you think you'd like to do the BBKA Basic Assessment this is the course for you

Practise with Basic Assessors in the 4 test areas

- Hive Manipulation, Equipment & Frame Making
- Natural History of Bees & Beekeeping
- Swarming, Swarm Control and Effects.
- Diseases, Pests and Poisoning

The cost will be modest and is 50% funded by the CEC.

Please email me

jane.ridler@uwclub.net EBKA Education Secretary, by 31st March

**STOP PRESS – there may still be a couple of places for the
MODULE 6 STUDY GROUP**

Tuesdays – Apr 11th; 25th & Wednesdays –Apr 5th; 19th

Chairman's Report 2017

Essex Beekeepers' Association (EBKA)

To be presented at the Annual General Meeting on 18 March 2017

Beekeepers spend a lot of time with a 'weather eye' out. Last year we had the same uncertain mix of weather patterns. However with such a gloomy start, followed by a cold, wet May, wind and rain caused tricky conditions for Queens to mate. Additionally, it's always a challenge to good beekeeping practice as we try to counter pests and diseases for strong healthy stocks. Suddenly, after all the cold and rain, warm humid conditions followed allowing summer to stretch into late October. Thankfully the bees did well resulting in good honey crops.

Our membership remains strong with plenty joining and hopefully taking hold of the reins in the years to come. Beekeepers new to this hobby join us with a lot of other skills. My hope is that they will freely volunteer their knowledge to help the Association move forward and develop. Like any community we have lost friends and members. I would like to mention Eric Fenner, our past President whose wife, Jean passed away in January.

Our finances remain in good health, resulting from prudent management of our resources as well as from increased membership. Collectively, this has been put to good use for all, with training courses and resources for Divisions being made available. It has also enabled us to absorb an increased capitation fee from the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA). We continue to look for good ideas where we can utilise our resources to benefit the EBKA Membership as a whole.

We continue to invite our BBKA Link Trustee, Howard Pool, to Central Executive Committee (CEC) meetings for dialogue and feedback on what the BBKA are doing for their Membership. He will visit us again this summer.

Since last summer it was confirmed that the Asian Hornet (*Vespa Velutina*) had arrived in England. Gloucestershire is only 150 miles from Chelmsford and with transport just over 2 hours! We all have a problem that is imminent. Essex has many points of entry from which the Hornet can arrive. I urge you all to make or purchase traps, learn the correct identification of this non-native species and monitor regularly around your hives. We must remember that the Asian Hornet will prey upon our indigenous insects. As Beekeepers we have a duty to care for and respect the environment, so please be mindful. The Small Hive Beetle (*Aethina Tumida*) is also a major threat, which again can enter the UK through multiple ways via Essex.

Our education programme continues to make progress with members taking exams. We ran countywide Module workshops as well a Basic Assessment exam workshop. I would like to thank our Master Beekeeper Jane Ridler and Richard Ridler for continuity and perseverance in very successfully teaching “old dogs new tricks”. Well done to both. We would like to see more members take advantage of all EBKA funded opportunities. The National Bee Unit (NBU) Bee Health Day in June last year was a great success. Keith Morgan, the Eastern Regions Regional Bee Inspector would like to see new faces at this year’s event. It is a good way to learn about bee diseases and to see the result of disease with real examples.

Our Divisions are collectively represented by Divisional Voting Members (DVMs) at the CEC. Our DVMs have a very important role undertaking the stewardship of the Association as laid down by the Charity Commission. It is important that the membership make full use of DVMs. In order to help them in their role, members may wish to question them and give feedback with ideas as to what additionally the CEC could do for its members.

The work of the CEC in recent times has introduced the annual “Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture”, continued to develop a county wide education programme, kept the membership fees stable and provided for all Divisions discounted annual bulk buys of microscopes in 2015 and pop-up shelters in 2016. Looking forward to 2017, the CEC is to set up working parties to look at governance issues and plans to develop the EBKA. We have also continued to challenge the BBKA in order to ensure that they operate in a more cost effective manner and questioned them on their activities as a critical friend.

The Ted Hooper Memorial Lecture took place last spring with great enthusiasm from the large audience who listened to Margaret Thomas and Clive de Bryun talk about Ted Hooper and his teaching methods. Members of the Ted Hooper family joined us at this inaugural event. We will be holding the second lecture of the series on Sunday 2nd April 2017.

The Essex Honey Show again saw high quality entries. With mixed weather during the weekend, the EBKA tent and demonstrations were well attended with great interest from the good folk of Essex. We must thank all those who graciously volunteered their time and energy - particularly Pat Allen and Paul Abbott for providing the Show with stocks of bees.

Sadly, the Barleylands show will not be happening in 2017. The Show Committee will be holding the event at the Orsett Show at the beginning of September for one year at least. We must remain vigilant and concerned about the role that Essex Beekeepers should perform in communicating with the non-beekeeping public and question whether we are fulfilling our mandate to promote our craft?

Entries for the National Honey Show in October at Weybridge showed a large increase with richly deserved success for those who took part. It was nice to see members from the EBKA participating in lectures and taking prizes; mentioning especially Jan French and Paul Abbott.

All Divisions have shown interesting and varied activities over the year, including training, lectures, demonstrations and workshops. All of these activities take a great deal of effort and good humour to organise and implement by willing volunteers. It is this attitude that binds our Association together. If you have not thought about volunteering, now is the time to consider getting involved and get to know fellow members in a meaningful way.

The 2016 Annual Conference, run by Romford Division, was a breath of fresh air, with excellent speakers, great food together with a quality raffle. As usual there was the presentation of cups from the Honey Show and BBKA examination certificates. I would like to congratulate members of Romford Division for all their hard work – it really paid off. Colchester Division has now picked up the baton for 2017. Please do your utmost to support them. Be involved!

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have given their time to help support the EBKA during the past year. I also offer my sincere thanks to members of the CEC for their continued support and, in particular, to the County Treasurer, Bob Manning whose term of office comes to an end at this year's AGM. We look forward to welcoming the new appointee in due course. I am also pleased to be welcoming to the CEC, Peter Aldridge, Vanessa Wilkinson and Chad Colby-Blake, the new DVMs for Chelmsford, Saffron Walden and Southend respectively.

Ian Nichols February 2017

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Essex Beekeepers' Association
137th Annual General Meeting

to be held on

Saturday 18 March 2017 at 2pm

in

Room E06, Writtle College, Lordship Lane, Chelmsford. CM1 3RP

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the 136th AGM
- 3 Report of the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee (CEC)
- 4 General Treasurer's Report & Approval of the 2016 Accounts
- 5 Written Reports of other members of the CEC
- 6 Election of County Officers (Trustees)
CEC Chairman, General Treasurer and General Secretary
- 7 Notification of the 2017 Divisional Voting Members and 2018 Presiding Officer
- 8 Election of County (non Trustee) Appointees
President
BBKA Delegate
Editor (*The Essex Beekeeper*)
Education Secretary
Examinations Secretary
NHS Delegate
EBKA Show Secretary
Spray & Disease Committee Delegate
- 9 Notification of CEC Appointees and Co-opted Members
- 10 Notification of Honorary County Life Member
- 11 Confirmation of the Accounts Examiner (External Auditor)
- 12 2016 Conference Report
- 13 2017 Conference Preview
- 14 Installation of the 2017 Presiding Officer
- 15 Reading from the Book of Commemoration

Following the AGM

Members of Colchester Division will provide refreshments

The AGM Keynote Speech: **Wally Thrale** from the Eastern Region Bee Forum will speak about the Eastern Region Research Students (EARS) and the EARS2 project researching Deformed Wing Virus

Bee Improvement for All

Speaker: Roger Patterson at Marks Tey, Essex. January 2017

A one day course to help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees using simple methods.

On Sunday 29th January 2017, Roger Patterson gave an all-day presentation to a packed hall of enthusiastic beekeepers, both novice and experienced. He was accompanied by his friendly border collie Nell.

Roger has been keeping honey bees since 1963, and bases all his talks on practical “in hive” knowledge gained from over fifty years of personal experience. A most interesting presentational delivery which was well received by nearly sixty apiarists from Essex, Suffolk and beyond.

The speaker’s mission was to help people keep their bees more efficiently, and encourage true enjoyment of their hobby; the very essence of improved husbandry. Beekeeping should be fun! Roger’s approach and delivery often contrasts with, yet complements those of lecturers and researchers with a more scientific background.

Roger had several suggestions on how to improve both the handling techniques used and characteristics of our bees. He mentioned that the temperament of colonies was of paramount importance when it came to keeping bees, particularly in non-rural areas. Beekeepers have a duty of care to their neighbours and the public not to host and propagate from aggressive colonies. The marking and clipping of queens as an essential aid to swarm control was emphasised. Likewise, the ruthless culling of queens from colonies which had undesirable traits was essential to improve the nature of the stock.

Simple queen rearing techniques were illustrated, and how to select colonies for breeding-in desirable traits. Roger gave an account of a successful programme in West Sussex where the characteristics of bees in a small area have been changed from stropy “British Standard Mongrels” to a docile and productive “native type” that can be worked on single British Standard National brood boxes. He mentioned how association beekeepers could collaborate in improving their strain of bees from local resources. He deplored the importation of over-prolific foreign queen bees, which sometimes caused problems when crossed with local native stock.

The delegates were ever attentive and asked a comprehensive range of probing questions, to which Roger willingly responded. Together with a slide show, he demonstrated various techniques with a bench full of useful beekeeping equipment.

Dave Cushman, the founder of an informative conglomerate beekeeping website, died in 2011, and bequeathed the site to Roger Patterson to keep it updated and relevant.

To gain access search for: <http://www.dave-cushman.net/>

Roger Patterson is author of: "Beekeeping. A Practical Guide". Also, seek: www.honeyrecipes.org.uk

In addition, he is very active in the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association: BIBBA: <http://bibba.com/>

After the meeting, there was appreciative applause from the delegates in thanks to Roger Patterson for an interesting, thought provoking and educational day. It really was the *Bees Knees!*

Barbara Sharp together with the Colchester Division of the EBKA were also praised for their organisational skills. This augurs well for The Essex Beekeepers Association Conference, to be hosted by Colchester on Saturday 21st October 2017. Make a definitive note in your annual diaries, and cancel all other events!

Paul F Abbott: Photographer & Apprentice Beekeeper.
Chairman to Southend on Sea & District Division of the EBKA

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A FEW BASIC RULES BEFORE WE BEGIN

Celia F Davis

A new year – a new series: No more plants and instead, some beekeeping problems. We all have them; indeed beekeeping would not be so much fun without them, although at times the word ‘fun’ has to be interpreted loosely.

I am hoping to look at some things that can go wrong, how these problems can be solved using various techniques you will not usually find in the books, procedures which you may think you will never need, but probably will at some stage. Most of the time I will be speaking from my own experience, (vast when it comes to problems and things that go wrong), sometimes from that of others that I have been able to observe. We never become experts in beekeeping – a chap called Neils Bohr stated that ‘An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field’, but this was refuted by Randy Oliver who replied: ‘This definition rules me out as I exuberantly continue to make mistakes. It appears that, hard as I try, I will never make them all’. So none of us are experts, the bees are the only experts. You may have overcome the same problem in a different way – if so I’m sure the editor would love to hear from you and others may benefit from your experience, so tell us.

By way of introduction I want to look at some general points and then some fairly basic rules of bee behaviour. By paying attention to the points and then applying the ‘rules’ you can overcome most problems with a little thought.

You are the biggest problem that your bees have. I’m sorry to be so personal but it is a fact that beekeepers cause many of the problems that bees face. This can be on a global scale: eg. movement of diseases and pests across continents or importation of ‘better’ bees from foreign climes, and on a more personal level: dropping the queen in the long grass or chopping off ALL the queen cells. The solution here is to think before you do anything and NEVER PANIC.

Varroa is paramount. If you don’t control the number of mites in your hives, by chemical or non-chemical means, everything else is academic, as your bees will almost certainly die or, at the very least, struggle.

Unmated, and even newly mated, queens are very lively, flighty creatures and can easily be lost. If there is one free queen (mated or unmated) and one sealed mature queen cell in a hive, the colony can swarm (and most likely will.)

Now to the Rules. These apply to bee behaviour and illustrate ways in which we can use that to reach our own ends.

Important Note - I will always preface any advice/comments with 'usually' or 'normally', so please bear this in mind when reading on -

Rule 1

Bees will return to their hive providing that it is no more than one metre away from its original position. If it is further away they will not find it.

Rule 2

If you shake or remove every bee in the hive, the queen **must** be amongst them.

Rule 3

Young worker bees will always move to cover brood if they are able to. Although they may be attracted to the queen, brood is far more attractive.

Rule 4

Smoke will drive bees. We often just think of smoke as a means of quietening bees and keeping them under control, but it can also be used to move them from place to place. Sometimes quite a large amount of smoke may be needed to accomplish this.

Those four basic rules can be grasped by even the most inexperienced beekeeper and it is then simply a matter of applying them. Many of the common problems associated with beekeeping revolve around the queen, so next month we will look at ways of finding the queen and marking her so that at least she is easier to see in the colony.

This is, in my opinion, the single most important thing you can do to improve your basic beekeeping.

Reproduced from Warwickshire BKA via *ebees*

From the *Welsh Beekeeper Magazine* — via Marlene Harris and Geoff Bazin
From America comes the report of a new inspector who visited an old farmer who had a sideline keeping bees, and demanded to be allowed to inspect them.

“OK” said the farmer, “*but don’t go in that field over there.*” The inspector waved his **ID** in the farmer’s face and declared that government authority meant he could go anywhere he wished, whatever the farmer said. 

The farmer politely agreed and got on with his farm chores. Half an hour later, he heard loud cries of alarm and saw the inspector racing for the gate at full speed, barely ahead of a very large, irate bull.

The bull was gaining on him with every step. The man was clearly terrified, so the farmer ran to the fence to help and shouted “*Show him your ID sir! Your ID! Show him your ID!*”

Disposing of Mead .

The charms of honey based alcohol - a dire warning!



I found we had twelve bottles of mead stored away in the back of a cupboard.

The contents of six of the bottles was sickly sweet, and the contents of the other six was sour and vinegary so it was decided that the mead should be poured away down the sink.

I withdrew the cork from one bottle of the sweet mead and poured it down the sink apart from one glass, and did the same with the other bottle of vinegary stuff.

I found mixing the contents of the two glasses made very palatable mead, which I promptly drank. Then I withdrew the cork from the second bottle of the sweet mead and poured it down the sink, apart from one glass and I did the same with a third bottle of vinegary stuff apart from one glass which I mixed and drank.

I pulled the bottle from the cork of the next; I drank one sink of it and threw the rest down the glass. I pulled the sink out of the next glass and poured the cork down the bottle and drank the glass. I pulled the next cork from my throat and missed the contents and poured the sink down the bottle.

I then corked the sink with the glass, bottled the drink and drank the pour. When I had every thing emptied, I steadied the house with one hand and counted the bottles, corks, glasses and sinks with the other which came to – twenty seven. To be sure I counted them again and they came to seventy two and as the house came by I counted them again and finally had all the houses, bottles and corks and glasses and sinks counted except one house and one bottle *which I drank.*

Pam Willis — Petersfield BKA via Notts BKA and *ebees*

Who's who and how to contact them

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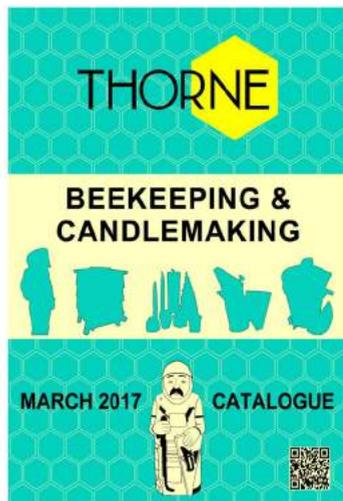
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Welsh Beekeepers Convention: 25th March

BBKA Spring Convention: 7th - 8th April

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