



Canterbury Beekeepers

Branch of the
KENT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
www.cantbees.freeuk.com

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NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2011

NEXT MEETING – Sat 2nd April - 2.30 Spring Inspection at Waldershare Apiary

We will be looking at Joan and Julian's hives and preparing for the season ahead.

There will be tea and coffee but it would be a good idea to bring a seat.

Make sure your clothing is clean and please bring thin nitrile gloves/marigolds – no handling of bees with leather gloves. If you need to borrow clothing make sure you request this in advance – thanks Julian.

Directions: Waldershare Park, CT15 5BD

Take road from Coldred to Eythorne and at second cross roads turn into park next to lodge house, Canterbury Lodge, CT15 5BD Ignore private signs. The apiary is about two hundred yards on the right hand side of road.

Website

We are in the process of upgrading our website! In order to better serve the needs of members, we've built a new site that will allow us all to discuss beekeeping online. There are two new elements that facilitate this.

In the "News" section, you will be able to leave comments on each item - so if we ask for volunteers to help out at a meeting, you can do this online. This section will be visible to everyone on the web, members of CBKA or not.

In the "Forum" section, we will restrict the access to members of CBKA only. This is where we can ask for advice, in a closed community, so that we can create a supportive and non-judgmental discussion. To use the forum, you will need to register first. This just requires a valid email address, and we will grant full privileges to any current member or friend of CBKA.

Whilst the new site can be accessed from our existing address, we have taken the opportunity to get a new URL. The older address will then become a forwarding site only.

Actions for all members:

- Update your favourites / bookmarks to <http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/>
- Visit the new site to register
- Initiate and participate in discussions
- Please bear with us if there are a few teething problems.
- Feedback your comments and suggestions on the new site

Thornes Agent - Tony Carter who has been our local supplier has now passed the agency onto Patrick Murfet of Dover Beekeepers he can be found on 01304 874824 Ty Bryn, The Leas, Kingsdown, Deal CT14 8ER

APIARY NOTES



Now is the time to open your hives if not already done. Check your queen is laying and that there are sufficient stores and room for the queen to lay. My colonies varied from 3 to 7 frames with brood on. You may need to re-arrange the frames a little by moving an empty comb next to the brood area to give space for the queen to lay. You can remove any badly formed and empty frames at the sides ideally replacing with drawn comb. They will be bringing in nectar and pollen to feed the growing numbers of larvae. It is still a little early to add foundation unless you feed copiously because of the relatively low temperatures.

Now is the time to plan the season ahead. One of the beneficial things to do to reduce the pathogen load held by the hive is to replace all or some of the comb. There are two suggested methods that allow you to change all in one go.

Firstly the Bailey comb change where any empty frames are removed and dummies placed either side with blocks etc. to take up any excess space. A brood box of foundation is placed over the existing brood and the colony fed with a large bucket contact feeder using thick syrup 3kg to 2 litres water. When the comb is starting to be drawn out place the queen in the top box with a queen excluder below. In three weeks or so when all the brood has hatched in the bottom box it can be removed. A slight improvement on this is to make a temporary new entrance with 8mm laths below the queen excluder and block the old entrance to encourage bees to ignore the old box.

Secondly if the colony is strong, i.e. at least 7 frames of brood a shook swarm can be carried out which has the additional advantage of removing varroa. Here the hive is moved to the side and an extra queen excluder is placed on the floor to stop the queen leaving. A full box of foundation is placed on the excluder with four frames removed. The queen is found and kept safe while all the bees are shaken into the new box. The four frames are replaced and the queen released. The colony will need feeding until all the frames have been drawn out.

Julian

Disease Examination

Now that the clocks have gone forward, and the oil seed rape is growing rapidly in the fields, we'll be able to have a good look inside our hives. This is also a time when colony illness can come to light. The combination of rapidly expanding brood and the natural losses of the winter bees can put a colony under stress such that diseases become apparent. Every beekeeper should learn the signs of the foul brood diseases, as you are legally obliged to notify the NBU. If you see unnatural looking larvae, pepper pot brood or scales in cells, then call our friendly Seasonal Bee Inspector Michael Cooper immediately.

There are also a number of adult bee diseases that are worth checking for in spring - in particular Nosema and Acarine. These can cause Spring Dwindling - where a colony fails to expand at the rate of other colonies in the same area. Fortunately Nosema and Acarine are relatively easy to diagnose with the aid of a microscope, and there are some easy treatments that can help the colony overcome the problems.

Adrian Davis recently passed his beekeeping microscopy certificate, and is keen to get more experience in assessing disease in colonies. Adrian is happy to analyse samples of your bees for Nosema, Acarine and other conditions, if you can get the bees to him (e.g. at an apiary meeting). There is a protocol to be followed to sample your bees, so if you want a **free** analysis of your bees, get in contact with Adrian (adrian.davis@talktalk.net).

Adrian

Notices

On the 14th May we are going to hold a series of local meetings around the district with one of our more experienced members to lead the event at each location. The intention is to build local links between beekeepers and bring a meeting closer to home. If you are interested in hosting a meeting please let me know or mention it to one of the committee at the next meeting. Julian

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Don't forget the BBKA Spring Convention, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. Friday 17th to Sunday 19th April at Stoneleigh Park Conference & Exhibition Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ.

Canterbury	Meetings
14 th May	Distributed local apiary meetings – details in later newsletter
4 th June	Vincent's apiary