

CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

I'm excited to report that we have a full late winter program now. Bob Smith is well known to many of us, and will be coming to talk about queen rearing on 6th Feb. In March, we will use a Question Time format to get

some discussion going about everything to do with bees and beekeeping. Hopefully we can generate some cheerfully controversial discussions! And we have just confirmed

that Dr Margaret Couvillon of the Laboratory of Social Insects at the University of Sussex can come to speak to us in April. Dr Couvillon is an excellent speaker, and is a postdoctoral researcher at one of the leading European bee research laboratories.

Having just taken down our Christmas decorations, the greeting card industry is now gearing up for the day of desperation for all teenagers (14 Feb).

I've been doing a bit of research to find out which saints look after bees and

their keepers. Read on for more information, but you can justifiably send a tasteful card to celebrate the craft of beekeeping during the second week of February, as there are *three* patron saints of

bees and beekeeping that have their feast-days in February!

I hope your bees are keeping healthy – but if you have any concerns, the [CBKA forum](#) is a great place to ask questions. This month, research for A-level students, and timings of oxalic acid treatment have been discussed.

Adrian

Next Meeting QUEEN REARING

With Bob Smith
Wed 6th February
7.30pm

Whitefriars
Management Suite

For directions: see page 2

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The easiest way to contact us is via the website, but you can also e-mail cantbees@gmail.com

Contact Newsletter editor to contribute articles

FEBRUARY 2013

A newsletter for friends and members of Canterbury BKA

DIRECTIONS

Whitefriars Conference room Canterbury

Free parking in the multi-storey car park. Collect your ticket and this will be processed during the meeting. Park on the 1st floor on the left and take the corridor down to the management suite at the bottom of the corridor on the left. Please car share if you can, since Whitefriars have to pay the cost of this on our behalf.

By car Set Sat Nav post code to CT1 2TF

Go around the ring road and at the roundabout opposite the Police Station turn through the city walls into Watling Street. Go past the bus station on your right and the Whitefriars multi-storey car park is straight ahead and right at the mini-roundabout. If coming from the south go down the Old Dover Rd and straight across the roundabout through the city walls.

By foot / BUS

Between the Bus Station and Whitefriars center there is an alleyway between Boots and Next. Here there is an entrance to the car park. Go to the first floor by lift and turn left out of the lift through double doors. The management suite is 20 yds along this corridor.



APIARY NOTES

February

When temperatures rise above 10 deg you are very likely to see bees at the entrance taking flights to cleanse themselves since they don't defecate in the hive. In February we are approaching the time when colonies are most likely to fail if short of food. Now is the ideal time to check on hive stores. Feel the temperature of the coverboard with your hand first. If warm you know they are raising brood. If you take a peek under the cover board when temperatures are over 5 deg and approaching 10 deg you can easily see if you still have plenty of sealed stores. If in doubt look further and check from the outside frames inwards. If you find the bees are short then feed.

Ideally use fondant or candy on top of the frames supported on a flat plate queen excluder or over the holes in the coverboard but if the colony looks nearly empty of food then feed some sugar syrup. In emergency you can apply liquid syrup directly into the empty cells of a frame by squirting syrup using an empty clean washing up bottle. Place this as close to the edge of the cluster as you can. It is also possible to feed bees using a contact feeder such as an inverted jar with a pierced lid. This is also used by some beekeepers toward the end of February who are trying to stimulate the queen to lay in preparation for the hoped-for nectar flow from oil seed rape in April. On average bees become foragers 6 weeks after eggs are laid. Once started continue to feed.

Check that hives are still secure and not been attacked by Green woodpeckers particularly in rural wooded areas. My hives have been attacked on any exposed areas not protected by wire netting and in one case managed to get under the netting at the front of a polystyrene nuc which enlarged the entrance so that mice can easily enter. See the photo above.



Julian

DATES FOR DIARY

6 th February 2013	Indoor meeting, Whitefriars. Bob Smith of Medway BKA discusses queen rearing
10 th February 2013	BBKA Module 1,2,3,6,8 Examinations: applications must be with Angela Merritt before this date
6 th March 2013	Indoor meeting: Question Time, Whitefriars
23 rd March 2013	BBKA Module 1,2,3,6,8 Examinations
3 rd April 2013	Dr Margaret Couvillon, Lab of Social Insects, U of Sussex Venue to be confirmed
6 th April 2013	Outdoor meeting, Westbere Apiary
12- 14 April 2013	BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University College, Newport. <i>The national beekeepers' event</i>
11 th May 2013	Stall at EcoFest, St Georges Lane, Canterbury
20-21 July 2013	Brogdale Cherry Festival
24-25 August 2013	Brogdale Cider Festival
19-20 October 2013	Brogdale Apple Festival

EAST KENT ASSOCIATIONS

Here's a quick digest of what the other local associations are doing over the next few weeks.

[Medway BKA](#) are holding their AGM and honey tasting event on Feb 16, whilst [Dover and District](#) have just held their AGM on Jan 26 in Alkham. [Whitstable and Herne Bay](#) are holding a members' sale of second-hand equipment in their Potting Shed on Feb 23. Medway's annual lecture, by Stuart Roberts of the Bees, Wasps and Ants Reporting Society, will be on 16 March in Wainscott Memorial Hall

Adrian

COURSES AT KSRC

KSRC Bees

The course series for Kentish beekeepers has started up. The next two courses are entitled "Flowers and Bees" on Sat 9th February and "Practical Husbandry", on Friday 8th March. Go to their [website](#) to find out more

NDB Short Courses

The latest National Diploma in Beekeeping courses have been [publicised](#). Anyone can go on them but the level is really for those with at least the Basic Exam. Most of those in the next six months are in Devon but there are two in Sittingbourne:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 - 2 March | Pollen with Bob Smith |
| April 29, 30 | Brood Diseases with Bob Smith |

FEBRUARY IS THE MONTH OF PATRON SAINTS

Unsurprisingly for a craft that has been documented since Ancient Egyptian times, Beekeeping has a number of traditional [saints](#), patrons and the like. As it turns out, there are rather more than I reckoned with, when I started to research this article!

St Ambrose of Milan is an early Christian associated with beekeeping.



Ambrose displayed his affection for bees at a very young age. Whilst in his cradle, a swarm of bees settled on him and he showed no distress when they ran over his face and even in and out of his mouth. After some time, it is recorded that the swarm flew very high and disappeared into the heavens. He was the bishop of Milan in the 4th Century CE, and is now known as patron of bee keepers; bees; candlemakers (or chandlers); domestic animals; the French Commissariat; learning; Milan,

Italy; schoolchildren; students; wax melters; wax refiners. His skills of exposition and skilful defense of Catholic doctrine led to him being declared one of the first four great Doctors of the Latin Church by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298. St Ambrose's feast-day is 7th December.

Saint Bernard, Abbott of Clairvaux was declared a Doctor of the Church, by Pius VIII in 1830, for his work in building the Cistercian order during the first half of the 12th century. He is claimed as patron by candle-makers, beekeepers, bees, Gibraltar, Queens College Cambridge, wax-melters and wax refiners. The beekeeping association seems tenuous, as he is known as Doctor Mellifluus,



the Honey-Sweet Doctor, so called for his eloquence. His memorial day is 20th August.

The Irish tradition gives us two much more interesting tales of beekeeping. Folklore has it that St Modomnoc of Ossory (died c. 550 AD) was an Irish saint and missionary who was a disciple of St. David of Wales. According to

[legend](#), he introduced bees to Ireland when a swarm followed him across the sea from his monastery in Wales, where he had been a beekeeper. In fact, he turned back twice to leave the bees in Wales, but they were determined in following him onto his boat. His feast-day is 13th February, and he is a patron saint of bees.

Saint Gobnait (or Gobnata, Gobnet) is one of the most popular saints of Munster, and her shrine is one of the oldest continuous pilgrimage sites in Ireland. Her popularity stems from her care for the sick and she is credited with saving the people at Ballyvourney from the plague. She also seems to have a miraculous way with bees. One folk story [reports](#) "*The English soldiers came and took a lot of stock in Ballyvourney, but on their way out the east road, Saint Gobnait released the bees from the bee-hive. They started to sting the soldiers until they were left without an eye or a nose and they were forced to leave the stuff behind them.*"

Another story relates how a powerful chief prayed to Gobnait for assistance,

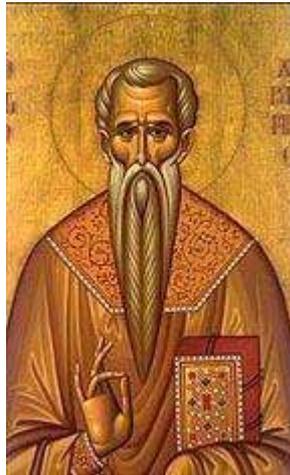


recognizing his troops to be incapable of victory.

Gobnait granted his request by transforming a hive of bees into military men. Her feast-day is 11th February.

The Orthodox Christian Church has its own beekeeping saint - Haralambos (Charalambos, Haralambi, Haramlampi), who has his Name-day on 10th February. Saint Haralambos seems to have a particularly strong tradition in [Bulgaria](#). Legends say that he was a Miracle Worker and a great healer. Because of his

healing, he was named a patron of diseases, and in particular, the plague itself. His association with beekeepers flows from honey's healing properties. A Bulgarian tradition is to bake special bread on 10th February, coat it with honey blessed in a holy mass, and share the bread with family and neighbours - to ward off pestilence.



Now, in researching this piece (well, googling), I came across quite a few beekeeping sites that claim that Saint Valentine of Rome

(the 14th February guy) is also associated with beekeeping. There does seem to be some validity to this, however Valentine also looks after love, couples, epilepsy, travellers and he is against the plague, so he's got a lot of groups to keep happy. I also noticed that Haralambos is used for the Name-day of people with the names Haralampij, Hari, Harry, Valentin, Valentina, Valery and Valeria. So perhaps two traditions have got interwoven.

Whichever beekeeping patron saint you prefer, and whatever the legends/lore that led to their associations, it would seem that celebrations are in order from 10-14 February!

Adrian



Bulgarian Orthodox faithfuls light candles alongside jars of honey during a holy mass for 'sanctification of honey' at the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin church in the town of Blagoevgrad some 100km from Sofia. Haralambos feast-day on 10th February.

Photo: EPA/VASSIL DONEV
[Link](#) to 'The Independent'

BBKA BUSINESS



The British Beekeepers Association

European Food
Standards Authority

(EFSA) scientists have identified a number of risks posed to bees by three neonicotinoid insecticides, in their report which was published on 16th January 2013. BBKA Chairman; David Aston issued a statement regarding the EFSA report, directed to all BBKA members.

This [link](#) will give you full access to the documentation – only the main conclusions are noted here. The risk

assessments considered three main routes of exposure to neonicotinoid insecticides, and recorded the following conclusions:

Exposure from pollen and nectar. Only uses on crops not attractive to honey bees were considered acceptable.

Exposure from dust. A risk to honey bees was indicated or could not be excluded, with some exceptions, such as use on sugar beet and crops

planted in glasshouses, and for the use of some granules.

Exposure to guttation fluid produced by treated plants.

The only risk assessment that could be completed was for maize treated with thiamethoxam. In this case field studies show an acute effect on honey bees exposed to the substances through guttation fluid.

quicklink for [BBKA EFSA](#)

NATIONAL SWARM COLLECTION

The BBKA website offers a service to identify swarm collectors, based on postcode. You can sign up to be listed as a swarm collector on [this website](#) – recognizing that this is published nationally. If you want to be added to this list, please contact Adrian. You can read more about it in the February 2013 edition of BBKA News.

Note that this is a separate scheme from that which we organize in our branch. Being local, we can be more sensitive to collectors' needs, your availability (daily/weekly changes) and travelling distance. When the season starts up, we will let you know more about this years' swarm coordination scheme.

[Quick link](#) to National Swarm Collection webpage

BBKA Phone Numbers

New local tariff phone numbers for BBKA office: 0871 811 2282 and 0871 811 2337.

Please note these numbers are provided on BBKA website, with the intention of members of the public using them, in particular during the busy swarm period.

The usual BBKA phone numbers of 02476 696679 and 02476 690666 are also available for all to use as/when required.

Dialling any one of the 4 phone numbers above will go through to the BBKA office.