

CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

This month's meeting is a panel discussion, with a triumvirate of experienced beekeepers, who will attempt to answer any question you have. We'd like you to do a bit of thinking ahead of the meeting, and will invite you

(by email) to submit questions. This is just to help the flow of the meeting, and there will be plenty of room for spontaneity as well.

The CBKA committee met this week,

putting in place the Spring and early summer program, which you can see on page 3. If anyone is interested to host a branch visit to their apiary in July, please let one of the committee know.

Later in this newsletter there are details about how we will support members who plan to take the BBKA basic assessment. David Cockburn will also be contacting folks who signed up for the

mentoring scheme, to get the groups started in early April.

The new season is fast approaching – I'm sure we are all looking forward to a warm Spring. Whilst the long spell of cold weather will have restrained colonies from brood-raising, we are now getting to the time when the

bees will be keen to collect pollen whenever the air temperature allows. Julian talks more about late winter management in his Apiary Notes on page 2.

And finally, just a quick

reminder that the [CBKA forum](#) is a great place to ask questions. This month, folk have been discussing wax polishes, the types of honey jar required for the coming season, and speculation about what types of pollen bees are collecting in late February.

Adrian

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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

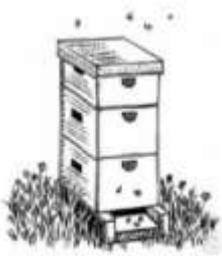
Free parking in the multi-storey car park. Collect your ticket and this will be processed during the meeting. Park on the 1st floor on the left and take the corridor down to the management suite at the bottom of the corridor on the left. Please car share if you can, since Whitefriars have to pay the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

March

This is the month when with warmer weather colonies will start to expand with an increase in brood. You can often get an indication of what is going on in the hive by observing pollen being collected which will be used for feeding brood and more directly by feeling the temperature on top of the coverboard. When rearing brood this will be very warm.

Stores are used up very quickly as the amount of brood expands. If you start running short add either fondant or feed sugar syrup using a contact feeder until they can forage for themselves.

If a colony dies try to ascertain the cause. Dead bees clustered together with their heads in the comb is usually starvation. Brown stains on the combs and often on the front of hives indicate dysentery which might have been induced by Nosema.

It is best with such colonies to thoroughly scrape all wax and propolis from boxes and blow torch or if thoroughly cleaned soak in bleach solution 1/6 household bleach to water for at least 20 min.

Frames can either be cleaned by cutting off all wax and scraping clean and then boil up frames in washing soda or alternatively if reusing comb treat with 80% acetic acid 120ml in a saucer/bowl on top of each box. Ensure they are sealed up by taping joints and/ or wrapping in a large plastic bag for a week. Air thoroughly for two days before reuse. Bleach can also be used to soak frames as above. In all cases protect eyes with goggles and hands with rubber gloves.

Julian

DATES FOR DIARY

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 "How good is the British countryside for honey bees? Decoding waggle dances to determine where bees forage" Thanington Resource Centre, Thanington Rd, Canterbury, CT1 3XE
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>
4 th May 2013	Spring safari – possibly with Seasonal Bee inspector
11 th May 2013	Stall at EcoFest, St Georges Lane, Canterbury
Early June 2013	Visit to hives in the Cathedral's Deanery
Early July 2013	Visit to a member's apiary
20-21 July 2013	Brogdale Cherry Festival
24-25 August 2013	Brogdale Cider Festival
19-20 October 2013	Brogdale Apple Festival

BASIC ASSESSMENT

For those of you who have been keeping bees for at least one or two years and are reasonably confident in handling a colony now is the time to consider taking the Basic assessment. This is an oral and practical assessment carried out by an assessor on behalf of the BBKA and held in a local apiary. It confirms that you have reached an appropriate standard. A bit like passing the driving test. If you have done one of my courses you will have covered most of the knowledge needed for the assessment.

You can prepare for this yourself and download the application form and syllabus from the BBKA web site which is then signed by one of the committee and sent off with a fee. However to assist you we are going to run a number of sessions to cover the syllabus starting on either the Wed, Thur or Fri 20, 21, 22nd in March. If you want to take part please email us and tell us which days you can and cannot do and we will pick a day that most can go on. Julian100@btinternet.com or text 07761839119.

Julian

EAST KENT ASSOCIATIONS

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

[Whitstable and Herne Bay](#) have a meeting focusing on Spring preparation for the season ahead on March 30th. Medway's annual lecture, by Stuart Roberts of the Bees, Wasps and Ants Reporting Society, will be on 16 March in Wainscott Memorial Hall. [Dover and District](#) have just had a lecture from local bumblebee conservationist, Dr Nikki Gammans on Feb 23. [Thanet beekeepers](#) are hearing about Varroa on 26th March from Bob Smith at Birchington Baptist Hall, and have just learnt about Mead from John Chapman.

Adrian

COURSES AT KSRC

KSRC Bees

The course series for Kentish beekeepers has started up. The next two courses are entitled "Practical Husbandry", on Friday 8th March, and "Adult bee diseases" (nosema and acarine) on Wednesday 10th April. 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. The next two in Sittingbourne are:

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

OPPORTUNITY TO SELL HONEY

We've been approached by St Mary's Church in Sittingbourne, who are organizing two food fairs on March 23rd and June 29th. They wonder if any branch members would be interested in having a stall there (£15 each fair, or both for £25). This would not be a formal branch "meet the public" event. If you are interested, let Adrian know – there's already a couple of people who have expressed an interest in perhaps going along.

WEIGHING HIVES

Unexpected Spend at National Honey Show

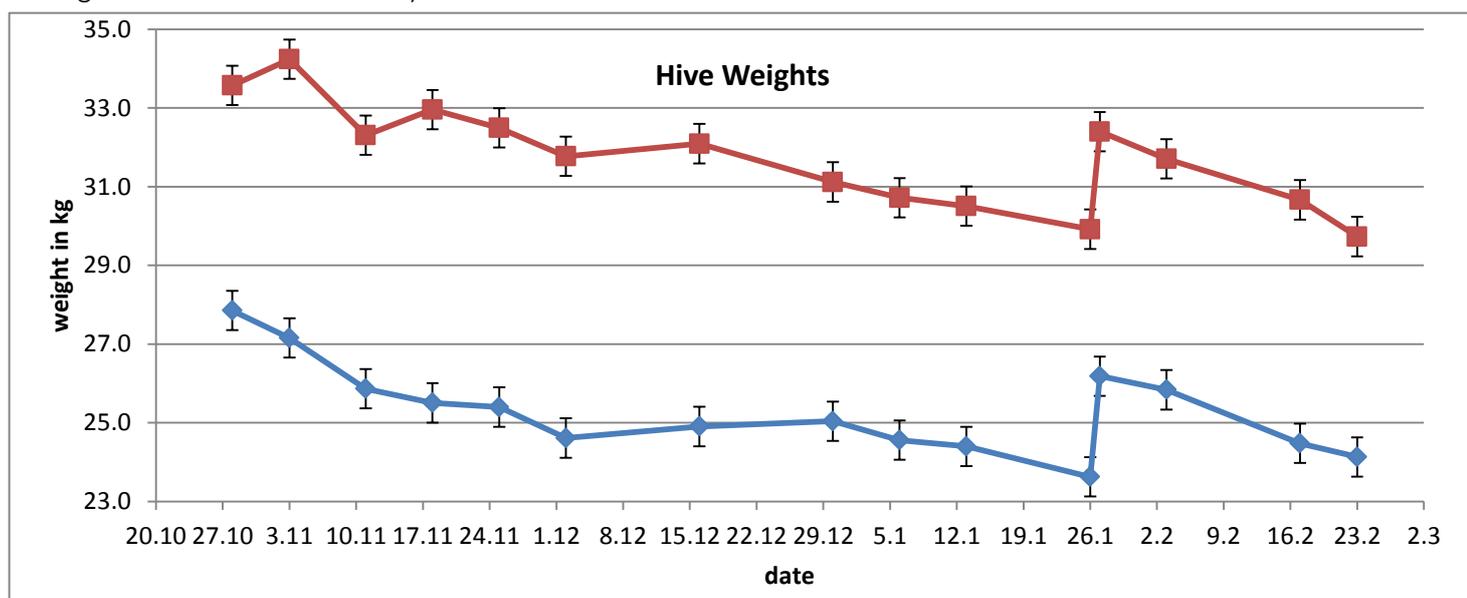
One of the slightly more dubious pleasures of the National Honey Show is the chance to spend lots of money in the very large trade hall. As in previous years, I spent more than I intended – having been seduced by a very friendly Australian bloke, selling the [Api-Scales beehive](#) weighing system. In truth, it's just a jazzed-up method for hefting hives, but I've been using it since November, so I've got a reasonable amount of data to show now.

I find it great that I can make an objective measure of my hives, without too much disturbance. The principle is simple – the hive sits on a hinged t-bar (shown in blue to the right). When you want to weigh, you use the lever device to lift the arm 2-3cm. You then multiply the reading by four, to get the weight estimate.

My measurements suggest that the absolute weight isn't particularly accurate, but differences are – so for example, when I put on 2.5 kg of fondant in late January, I measured a 2.58kg weight gain, which is more than accurate enough for non-scientific purposes.

So, what have I found – below are the weights for the two hives, and you can see that

they are tracking quite well through the winter. The colonies now seem to be losing about 600g/week – and I'd expect this to increase quite markedly once the broodraising starts in earnest. Interestingly, tho' the colonies have lost 2-2.5 kg since feeding with fondant, they have barely touched the fondant itself! Adrian



LEARNING TO READ BROOD COMB

And do some citizen science

We can always get better at assessing our colonies – and at this time of year, it's quite therapeutic to remember the times inspecting hives with sweat running down your back!

If you want to get back into the swing of reading comb, then you could do a lot worse than sign up to broodmapper.com: an interactive environment where you can learn to identify different stages of brood development and cell contents.

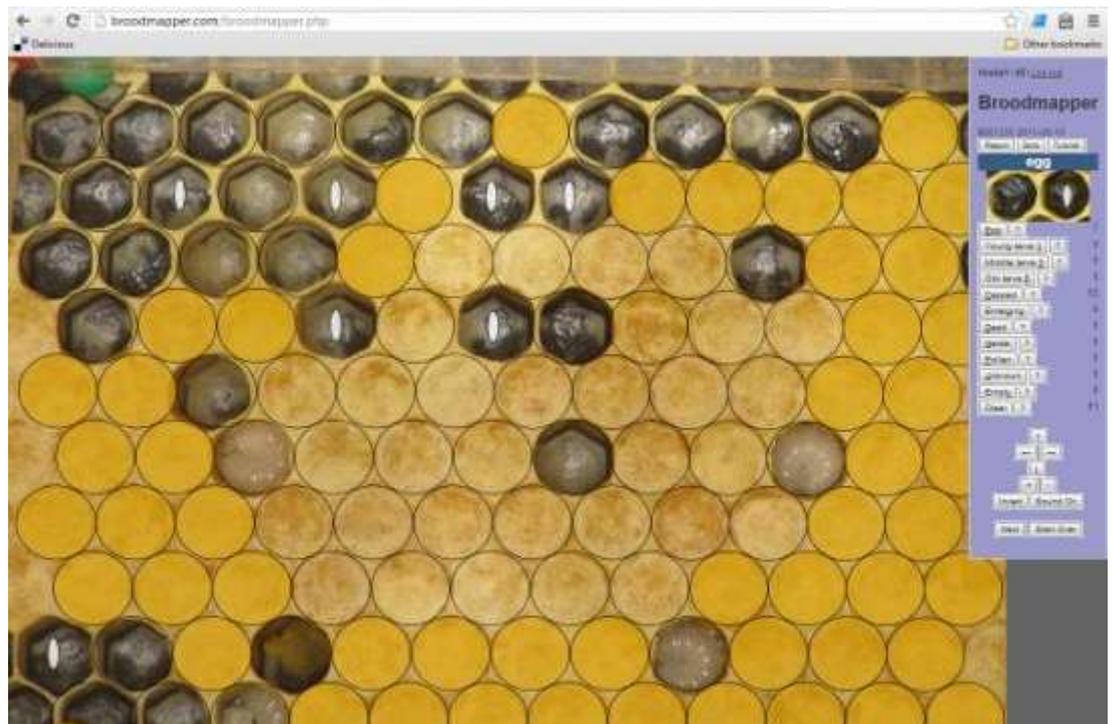
Anyone can volunteer to help identify the cell contents in photographs of broodcomb and hone their skills in inspecting colonies. The Ohio State University is investigating Miticide and Fungicide Interactions and their effect on honey bee brood survival and development. As a part of that study, [Broodmapper](http://broodmapper.com) is used to determine the cell contents using photographs of combs from experimental colonies. So you learn something, and also contribute in a small way to research - as you perform citizen science!

[Quicklink](#) to broodmapper

Adrian



Four of the honey bee development stages identified in Broodmapper. E = egg, 1 = young larva, 3 = middle larva, 5 = old larva.



The broodmapper software in action