

CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

Firstly, a big thanks to Chris Reichman and Martin Keeys, Deborah Kellond and Chris Bristow for organizing an excellent apiary meeting at the Deanery in the Cathedral grounds in early June. The Dean, The Very Revd Dr

Robert Willis, made us feel extremely welcome, and was very generous with his time, showing us around both the Deanery and the cathedral itself. In between, we got to rummage around in the

healthy looking colonies (including making a split), and partake of a fabulous high tea. Well done to all concerned.

Whilst we've hardly had a blazing June, most colonies will have built up well. Interestingly, there have been relatively few swarm reports this year – and may be more supercedure. Committee

members report a low number by comparison with recent years, and this pattern seems to be repeated elsewhere in the country. Fortunately, some of our newest members have been in receipt of the few swarms notified. If you have swarms, nucs or colonies to spare,

then we could really use some bees for the Westbere Apiary - we have empty hives there.

With strong colonies, it should now be possible to get a good read on the temperament of your colony. Try to get in the

habit of objectively assessing your bees, as described on p 5.

We have a number of events scheduled through the summer, so please try to join in, either at Brogdale or Whitefriars.

Finally, good luck to everyone taking the BBKA Basic Certificate this month!

Adrian

Next Meeting ORCHARD APIARY PRESTON

As guests of Richard &
Caroline Charnock

Sat 6th July, 2.30-4.30pm

Joining instructions
– see page 2

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The easiest way to contact us is via the website, but you can also e-mail

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Contact Newsletter editor to contribute articles

JULY 2013

A newsletter for friends and members of Canterbury BKA

DATES FOR DIARY

6 th July 2013	Visit to Richard and Caroline Charnock's orchard apiary in Preston
12-14 July 2013	Kent County Show, Detling (includes KBKA honey show)
13 th July 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
20-21 July 2013	Brogdale Cherry Festival
3 rd August 2013 (tbc)	Apiary inspection and honey extraction demonstration, Westbere
17 August 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
24-25 August 2013	Brogdale Cider Festival
26 August 2013	Kent Festival of Bees, Highland Court Farm, Bridge
21 September 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
19-20 October 2013	Brogdale Apple Festival
22 October 2013	Thanet BKA quiz night

APIARY VISIT TO PRESTON

Saturday 6th July 2013, 2.30pm

Thanks to Richard and Caroline Charnock for inviting us into their orchard Apiary in Preston. The apiary is at Little Stour Orchard, Church Lane, West Stourmouth, CT3 1HU. 51°19'05.06''N - 1°14'00.22''E. Church Lane is off the road between Preston and Pluck's Gutter.

The orchard is down a track on the left: go through the gates and park immediately inside the gates on the left and then we can walk up to the hives. There should be some signs to show the entrance to the orchard and where to park.

As usual, please observe good apiary hygiene – clean beesuits and gloves (no leather gauntlets)

This is the orchard from which Micky & Sarah Bowers produce their award-winning apple juice. You can check out their website for more details: <http://www.littlestourorchard.co.uk/>

COLONY ASSESSMENT

How do your colonies change through the summer?

If you've been on any decent course about beekeeping – Julian's being one such! – you will have been encouraged to keep records of each of your hives. This is a good practice for several reasons – we tend to forget if things aren't written down, and it's useful to be able to compare between hives – either your own, or perhaps with another local beekeeper in your mentor group.

Long term, this can give you insights into whether your colonies are doing well, or not. Whilst it's possible to record dozens of features of a hive, there are some things that might suit us all. To assess colony build-up the following characteristics are good: the number of seams with bees; the amount of brood (measured in half-frames), queen(s) seen, eggs seen. The varroa drop should be recorded regularly, if not at every visit, and if the drop exceeds NBU guidance levels of ~1/day put in place appropriate light controls. If >8/day your colony is at severe risk, and need immediate attention. Once or twice a year we hope that estimates of honey yield can be made.

Perhaps more importantly, you should also assess your colony's behaviour. Stinginess is never attractive – what we want are gentle colonies. Swarming tendency should be limited (ideally just to supercedure in most years). For the sake of your neighbours, the bees should not follow you away from the hives. To make inspections easy, the bees should be quiet on the comb, and not jump up at you. It's possible to put objective scales on these features on a 1-5 scale, where 5 is most desirable.

If you use such a scheme throughout the season, you will quickly get used to judging your colonies – and have a record of which colonies are your “keepers”, and which might need “upgrading” with a new queen in the late summer, or spring. On the website you'll find posted a record card that you can use. You could even laminate it, so that it can be left inside the roof of a hive, and written on with permanent marker pens.

<p>Gentleness</p> <p>5. Don't sting. Use of smoke unnecessary.</p> <p>4. No stings when smoke is used.</p> <p>3. 1 to 3 stings unprovoked.</p> <p>2. 4 to 10 stings unprovoked.</p> <p>1. Aggressive. Sting easily.</p>	<p>Swarming tendency</p> <p>5. No queen cells with eggs.</p> <p>4. Queen cells with eggs. Nothing has been done to prevent swarming.</p> <p>3. Queen cells with eggs. One preventive work has been done.</p> <p>2. Queen cells with eggs and queen larvae which have been fed. More preventive works have been done.</p> <p>1. Swarming.</p>	<p>Still on Comb</p> <p>5. Very quiet. The bees walk seemingly undisturbed on the combs even if provoked. Can easily be shaken off. They don't take off even if shaken off.</p> <p>4. Quiet. A little nervous movements on the comb. They don't take off, but they do fly if shaken off.</p> <p>3. Nervous. The bees are running on the combs and a small number of bees jump up unprovoked.</p> <p>2. Quite nervous. The bees run on the combs. Many bees jump up unprovoked.</p> <p>1. Many bees in the air.</p>
<p>Following</p> <p>5. don't follow</p> <p>4. 1-3 bees follow up to 5m from hive</p> <p>3. multiple bees follow up to 5m from hive</p> <p>2. 1-2 bees follow up to 10m from hive</p> <p>1. multiple bees follow >10m from hive</p>	<p>Honey harvest</p> <p>5. More than 50% above the average of the apiary.</p> <p>4. 10 to 50% above the average of the apiary.</p> <p>3. The average of the apiary + / - 10%.</p> <p>2. 10 to 50% below the average.</p> <p>1. Lower than 50% of the average.</p>	<p>Varroa Drop</p> <p>Record the number of varroa dropped, as a daily average over at least 7 days.</p> <p>Action: refer to graph for action limits</p>

Download the record card from our website here:

<http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/2013/06/record-cards/>

Adrian

MEET THE PUBLIC EVENTS

EcoFest, Whitefriars and Brogdale

We have been pleased by the number of people who have come up to speak to us at the various events held this year with an awareness of the reports of overall bee decline from both TV and press reporting, also from the various campaign groups. Did you know that Friends of the Earth have calculated that the UK honey harvest was down 70% last year? They currently have a petition, aimed to persuade David Cameron to support bees. It is written in very general terms and to me seems more of an awareness raising exercise for children, rather than a serious exercise to challenge the government's flawed farming policy. If any beekeepers have children or grandchildren then it can be reached on the [FOE website](#), I think it is a valuable teaching aid.



The first of the BeeDays was held on 22nd June in the city centre, with the support of Whitefriars. Our guess is that the number of visitors was significantly less than 200+ visitors we had at the eco-fest stand. There are two main reasons, firstly the weather was not as good and secondly positioning. At the Eco-fest we were very well sited, just down from McDonalds. Whitefriars Square does not have the same footfall as the High Street. We will soon be looking for volunteers to help out for a few hours on **13th July** – talking about the observation hive, gardening for bees, selling some honey and generally passing on our passion for bees.

We will also be attending the [Festivals at Brogdale](#) again this year, starting with the Cherry Festival, **July 20-21**. Julian Audsley and Chris Bristow will do some lectures, and we need people to help man the stand: Maggie McKenzie will coordinate the “rota”. We will run a number of sessions during the day and normally have two people on duty at a time. You will be able to attend all the festival events – the tours of the cherry trees being especially worthwhile. Please let Maggie know when you are available over the two days and whether you can do morning or afternoon sessions (email cantbees@gmail.com). We also need to know if you can help set up on the Saturday and arrive by 9.00.

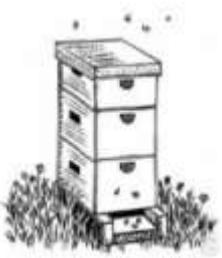


For events at both Whitefriars and Brogdale, we will also send separate emails about a week before the event itself, but please try to make time to help out at one or more of these enjoyable “days out”. We're particularly keen to have local honey to sell on the stands, so please bring it along – or contact Jenny/Maggie to discuss other options (via cantbees@gmail.com).

Jenny Cotterill / Chris Bailes / Maggie McKenzie

APIARY NOTES

JULY



Honey should be coming into your hives in a plentiful supply. In most areas the oil seed rape is coming to an end and the field beans are in full flower. Lime will be out shortly. I have only just taken a first crop of honey off – although there is plenty in the hive they have delayed capping it and the shake test is still finding loose nectar. The honey is showing no signs of setting although some bees were right next to the oil seed rape. Last year it took a week to start setting so it will be interesting to compare. I shall try to clear all the supers that were on during the rape so I don't get caught out

with set honey in the combs. Check your varroa level and if high consider a shook swarm to remove varroa and renew your combs. Remember to leave or put into the new box of foundation at least one empty drawn frame of frame of unsealed eggs and larvae to trap the remaining mites on the bees.

Now is also an excellent time to raise a new colony if you have a good queen. Use one of the methods suggested before such those based on a demaree method and then once queen cells are raised separate them from the queen to raise you queen.

If you use the method of renewing 3/4 combs a year in spring now is the time to work these to the outside of the box and mark them to show that they are to be replaced. In spring these will usually be empty of brood and can be removed and rewaxed.

All the candidates for the Basic Assessment have taken their test on Sunday - an excellent day with temperatures in the shade between 20 and 22 deg. Results shortly.

Julian

HONEY EXTRACTOR

We've heard whispers that one or two people have actually produced some honey already this year –their colonies having built up sufficiently before the oil seed rape was in flower, rather than building up on the OSR flow. So it is timely to remind you that CBKA has a 4-frame centrifugal extractor and settling tank available for hire. Chris Bailes is storing the extractor and coordinating the hiring-out. It's usually the case that

people need the extractor at similar times, so we charge £5.00 for 24hrs. Contact Chris directly on 01227 768470. There is a message taking facility on the phone and Chris will respond within the day. Otherwise texts can be sent to his mobile 07586 851625. Please indicate length of hire and remember that the borrower is responsible for returning it back fully cleaned. Collect from 94, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3PF (entrance in Ethelbert Road, after the big holly hedge).

For those of you who are yet to produce honey, we are hoping to be able to do a demonstration of honey extraction at our August meeting.

Chris Bailes



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](#) had a meeting focusing on extracting and processing honey and hive products on 29th June, in their teaching apiary at the University of Kent's Canterbury campus. [Dover and District](#) are meeting at Patrick Murfet's Bee Inspired Zone at Highland Court Farm, Bridge on July 27. [Thanet beekeepers](#) have an apiary meeting in Chislet on Sunday 7th July, at 3pm.

COURSES AT KSRC

The course series for Kentish

beekeepers continue. There are still spaces available for Mary Hill's course "how to pass the BBKA basic examination" on July 6th. Due to popular demand, Jennifer Dinsmore's course on Beeswax products is being repeated on September 7th. Go to their [website](#) to find out more, and make bookings.



NDB COURSES

Bob Smith will be running NDB short courses on *Brood Diseases* on 9-10 September, and on *Microscopy* on 18-19 October, both in the KSRC facilities. The courses are attractively priced (compared to alternative offerings) at £75, and are well worth attending for folks ready to take their beekeeping to a higher level. More information from the National Diploma of Beekeeping [website here](#).

BBKA BUSINESS



The British Beekeepers Association

Education News

You may have seen an advert in July's *BBKA News* for two courses organized at Harper Adams University near Newport in Shropshire, one entitled "Towards Improved Husbandry", the other "3D honey bee anatomy". These will be run on 7-8 September. Follow [this link](#), if you've misplaced your *BBKA News* (you'll need your membership card to login).

Kent BKA

Bob Smith (New Eltham) is the chief steward for the Kent Honey Show at Detling on 12-14 July, and he is now recruiting volunteers to help staff the show. In exchange for 2x 2hr sessions of help, you get an entry ticket (worth £20!), so you can use the time between your sessions to enjoy the rest of the event. In addition to volunteer stewards, Bob is also looking for people to enter the Honey Show, as well as supplies of honey for sale. If you are interested to learn more, there are three documents on our website ([here](#)) which together give a comprehensive description of activities, volunteer responsibilities and rewards, how to supply honey, together with contact details should you wish to contact Bob.

KENT FESTIVAL OF BEES

Bee-Equipment Nr Bridge (Patrick Murfet's enterprise) proudly presents the Kent Festival of Bees on the 26th August. New to the beekeeping calendar for the first time this year a beekeeping event that is aimed at the general public and beekeepers. An event that includes all the usual honey show activities, with the added incentives of prizes in every class. Everyone is welcome, new beekeepers and the more experienced it's a show for everyone. The entry to the honey show is free, the public entry is free, and in fact, the whole programme of events is free. We have a programme of talks on all types of bees and related subjects as well as live bee demonstrations, as well as other attractions such as face painting and bush crafts. We are still building the programme so if you have a talent with a tenuous link to beekeeping let us know and maybe we can include it. We do have stalls available free of charge on a first come basis for any association or organisation to promote its activities and products.

For more information, please contact Patrick Murfet by email – mail@bee-equipment.co.uk

by phone 01304 374824,

or go to their website: <http://www.bee-equipment.co.uk/>

