



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

The first inspection of the year is always something to look forward to, and I imagine that you've all been into your hives by now. This is the week that BBKA regard as the end of winter, and you are encouraged to return their annual overwinter

colony survival survey this week, which you should have received a few weeks ago. Hopefully your first inspection found all your colonies in good health, but this early in the season, a variety of stress-related conditions, such as chalkbrood or nosema, as well as the

foulbroods may be found, particularly in weak colonies.

To address the problems of colony replacement and disease management, we have two meetings this week. On Wednesday, Joan and Julian will talk at Whitefriars about basic queen rearing, and they hope to convince

you that this is something that everyone can (and should) be doing each year. The intention is not to cover all of the many ways that have been invented for queen rearing, but to give everyone a simple procedure to follow. As someone who has recently lost a queen – I must have

damaged her whilst marking her 2 weeks ago - it's reassuring to know that producing a replacement queen will be straight-forward.

On the 5th April, assuming the weather stays fair, we will meet at David Cockburn's apiary to look at his colonies,

and to practice techniques of comb replacement. Old brood comb can harbour a lot of disease spores, and so regular replacement is recommended. A separate email will supply meeting instructions.

Adrian

Next Meeting

Basic queen rearing
JULIAN AUDSLEY
JOAN MCALLISTER
Whitefriars conference room, Canterbury
Wednesday 2nd April

7.30-9.30pm
Joining instructions
– see page 2

CBKA OFFICERS

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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

APRIL 2014

DATES FOR DIARY

2 nd April 2014	Branch meeting, 7.30pm, Whitefriars management suite. Julian Audsley and Joan McAllister Basics of queen rearing
4-6 April 2014	BBKA Spring Convention (link) Harper Adams University Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB
5 April 2014	Apiary meeting (David Cockburn's apiary, 34 Whitstable Road Canterbury CT2 8DQ). 2.30-4.30pm Theme: Comb changing
26 th April	Seasonal Bee Inspector tour focus on build-up; disease checks; colony assessments
10 th May	Apiary meeting: Queen-raising preparations
17 th May	Meet the public: Ecofest, Canterbury
31 st May	Apiary meeting: Queen rearing
14 th June	Apiary meeting: Introducing new queens to colonies, nuc making
15 th June	Meet the public: Brogdale strawberry fair, Faversham
28 th June	Apiary meeting: Marking/caging/clipping
12 th July	Meet the public: White Mill demonstration, Sandwich

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.

BEE SAFARI

Sign up Soon!

Our meeting on Saturday 26th April will be a safari - Michael Cooper, our local bee inspector, will tour around with CBKA to help with early spring inspections. Please let me know if you are happy to have us visit you on that day. In past years, this has been very successful; we can usually fit in about 7 apiaries. Last year we started in Sarre, and toured through Canterbury, Littlebourne, Kingston, Coldred ending up outside Folkestone – so we get a lot of value and time from Michael Cooper. Members whose apiaries we are not visiting are welcome to join us at conveniently close locations.



We'd hope that each of the mentor groups is represented during the tour, as it's a good way to re-start the seasonal support groups.

Email cantbees@gmail.com , as soon as possible, if you would like to put your name down for a visit by Michael. I will circulate the final details by email on or about the 19th April, so please reply before then if you want to be a stop on the safari.

Adrian

HONEY JARS

Bulk Order from Compak



Whilst we can't quite match the bulk order of 400 poly nucs that Yorkshire BKA managed over the winter (see their website [here](#) for more details), we can try to save a few pounds here and there on transportation costs. Whether you want two-dozen, or a gross of honey jars, the transportation costs can be quite a significant fraction of the cost. We're planning a bulk order from Compak, to help members out. Please navigate to their [website](#) to decide what you want – but instead of ordering, copy down the exact description required, and we'll make up a single large order. Please specify size (e.g. 12oz or 16oz), type (e.g. round or hexagonal), lid type (e.g. gold metal or white plastic), as well as the number you need. We expect to be able to get "Spring Convention" prices, at a slight discount to the online price.

We do have nascent plans for storing and distributing the order at apiary meetings in May, but if you are based in or near Canterbury, and would be prepared to store a lot of boxes for a few weeks, then let Julian know. Email Julian with the details of your order: julian100@btinternet.com by 12th April.

SWARM COLLECTION AND SUPPLY 2014 arrangements

Canterbury BKA is keen to promote a good image of beekeeping, and nothing can be as effective as the clean taking of a swarm of bees from a nervous non-beekeeper's garden! Equally important is the useful resource that swarms offer, particularly for getting novice beekeepers started, as well as replacing hives that didn't make it through the winter.



Although 2013 wasn't a particularly swarmy year, we will organize ourselves similarly to last summer. Whilst the BBKA website does offer the possibility to register directly, the CBKA committee continues to recommend that we provide a more locally coordinated service, in recognition of the relatively large area we cover, with a low density of beekeepers. The tricky part is to respond quickly, so that collection can take place before the swarm moves off!

Julian Audsley has volunteered to act as swarm coordinator for the branch. If you are interested to help out with the coordination, please contact him directly (email julian100@btinternet.com)

As in previous years, we will use our website to keep a track of both our collectors, and people who need swarms to (re-)stock their apiary. Because we need to share phone numbers etc, you'll need to have registered on the website, so that you can see the "swarm collection and receipt" pages. Contact Adrian (cantbees@gmail.com) if you have any problems with the website.

If you want to collect bees, then we'd like you to supply realistic availability information – which can be updated as often as you want. Unfortunately swarms don't often present at 2pm on a Saturday afternoon, and the coordinator can waste a lot of time phoning around. Trust us, you will be contacted, if there's a swarm near you on a day that you are free.

If you want to receive a swarm, then we will also need contact information (but you don't need to be hanging on the phone). We will try to prioritise those who have attended a winter course.

Whether you are a collector or a hopeful receiver, please navigate to our swarm collection webpages, and having reviewed the contents, use the reply feature on the appropriate page to supply the requisite information <http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/control/>

Given that swarm collection can be a great advert for local beekeepers, it ought to be done well. The BBKA has a protocol for swarm collection, outlining the expectations of a swarm collector, as well as their guidance for how to take a swarm.

Methods for taking a swarm: link [here](#)

Protocol for swarm collectors: link [here](#)

Julian Audsley and Adrian Davis

BBKA BUSINESS



The British Beekeepers Association

Website Access

BBKA receive many questions from members about accessing the Members Area of the BBKA Website and asked secretaries to disseminate this information to members.

To access the Members Area of the BBKA Website, members need to log-on to the website and update their information. You will need your BBKA membership number (on the card you get in your membership pack). Follow the instructions at <http://www.bbka.org.uk/members/login.php> to complete the login process. BBKA encourage all members who have access to the Internet to log on to the BBKA Website and update their profile information.

BBKA Website Technical support

If any of your members are experiencing problems accessing the BBKA Website either telephone the BBKA Office (Tel: 0871 811 2282 or 0871 811 2337) or send the details of the problem in an email to office@britishbeekeepers.com and we will try to provide help and assistance.

David Teasdale

BBKA Trustee, Chairman BBKA Website Working Group

GARDENING FOR BEES

Throw Away your Pesticides

2013 was a year when the beekeeping community got a lot of information about neonics, and the potential harm they do to pollinating insects. Whilst you may not be happy with the limited 2-year moratorium that the EU has placed on imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam, these are at least temporarily withdrawn from commercial/professional use as seed dressings, but also for garden products. The withdrawal (in effect a ban) came into force on 30 September 2013, and whilst there was a period of grace to use up these materials by 30 November 2013, it is now illegal to use them. Any remaining products should be taken to a manned local authority household waste site where they should be handed over to the staff. For information on waste disposal sites see [this link](#).

It remains legal to use other neonicotinoid-based products that are not affected by the withdrawal, in particular thiacloprid, but you may well want to avoid products containing this too.

The Health and Safety Executive is the government agency which defines which chemical products are legal. See their [website](#), where you can also find the definitive [database](#) on legally acceptable pesticide products.

Reputable retailers will already have removed products containing the withdrawn substances, but you should also check your shed/garage and dispose responsibly of any old products. HSE advice is to dispose of any pesticide/herbicide at the end of each season, as the lists of approved products changes year by year.

Of course, there are always people who will try to ignore the government's rules. Just in the past week, pressure groups such as Buglife (<http://www.buglife.org.uk/>) and 38 degrees have been taking eBay to task to get them to suspend sellers who are breaking the ban by offering

illegal products such as Dominion insecticide, which is imported from USA.



As beekeepers, we should be cheerleaders for reduced insecticide use in both domestic and farming situations. The Royal Horticultural Society offers plenty of [advice](#) on how to control insects, with plant-derived (implying more natural) chemicals, and organic food advocates, such as the [Soil Association](#), also offer plenty of reasonable advice.



MBKA ANNUAL OPEN LECTURE 2014

I received this information from Medway Beekeepers to distribute to CBKA members. Unfortunately this lecture clashes with our Bee safari, but some members may wish to go over to Medway.

"We are opening our Annual Lecture to other associations and would be grateful if you could distribute the enclosed flyer to your members. We very much hope that some of them will be able to join us for what should be an interesting and enjoyable afternoon."

Non-standard Medications - are they all good?

Pam Hunter C.Biol. F.S.Biol. FLS. MB

Saturday 26 April 2014, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Wainscott Memorial Hall
16-18 Holly Rd, Wainscott, Rochester
Kent, ME2 4LG



MBKANews
Celebrating over 90 years of support for beekeeping and beekeepers around the Medway Towns

There is now a plethora of new medicaments available for treating colonies, some claiming almost magical properties. Almost all say that they are 'natural' and some that they 'contain no chemicals'. Organic acids are frequently an ingredient. With so many products and such claims, we should all have amazingly healthy and productive colonies! There are experimental data for some of these products while others seem to have none. I shall discuss many of these claims and examine the reality of such touching faith in anything natural. Overall there is some promise with a few products of activity against varroa, Nosema and chalk brood, but the beekeeper needs to be wary of accepting all the claims.

About myself

By profession I am a microbiologist who has spent about 3 decades in the pharmaceutical industry engaged in research into new antimicrobial agents. By inclination I have always had a love for all aspects of natural history and had a tendency to fill the house with plants and creatures of all sorts as a child. I was inspired by reading the wonderful Colin Butler 'World of the Honey bee' in the mid 1970s but somehow took just over ten years to actually start beekeeping! By then I had quite a good background on the theoretical biology of bees and found the practical side equally fascinating. I am particularly interested in the interaction of bees and plants as well as the biology of these wonderful insects. I live in a very rural part of the centre of Sussex and have usually about 6-8 hives. I eventually started beekeeping in 1989. I'm the Meetings' Secretary of the Central Association, which involves getting the speakers for our three meetings a year, a member of the Exam Board of BBKA and a member of BIBBA. I enjoy writing articles about beekeeping, especially scientific aspects, and the interaction of plants and bees. I am a Master Beekeeper, a Chartered Biologist, Fellow of the Society of Biology and a fellow of the Linnaean Society.

Bookings

Admission to the Lecture is free of charge. However, please let Alex Barker know if you will be attending so that they can provide adequate catering. To book your place/s or for further information, please contact: Alex Barker newsletter@mbka-news.com or telephone him on 01634 406360.

BEES AND BEANS

Citizen Science at University of Sussex



I mentioned this in the last newsletter – almost as soon as the newsletter was published, Sussex had closed the scheme as they had reached the maximum number of participants. I'm sorry if you didn't get to register, but LASI are a good group to follow – either on the web, or via social media such as twitter: <https://twitter.com/ljbees>

You could always try growing related plant types side-by-side and figuring out which are the more popular types (see December 2013 newsletter: link [here](#)).

BEEKEEPERS @ KSRC

Courses in 2014



Beekeepers @ KSRC is now in its 3rd year and its prime purpose remains essentially the same – to provide training and education opportunities for “Improver Beekeepers” from any of the 16 Kent Associations and Branches. The target audience are those who have kept bees for two seasons, and have achieved the Basic Certificate.

All of the classroom and laboratory-based courses are delivered in the excellent facilities available at KSRC (Kent Science Resource Centre) near Sittingbourne, a location that is reasonably central for all of Kent.

Courses will run throughout the season – here are those in April:

Starting Queen Rearing –	Thur 10th April
How to pass the Basic	Sat 12th April
Advanced Queen Rearing	Thur 24th April

An innovation this year are some practical beekeeping classes. The aim is to provide coaching in reading the bees, proactive management, apiary hygiene and smooth, confident handling. You will get plenty of access to hives, working in small groups so that there's practical learning for each delegate. There are events on 28th April, 11th May, 28th May, and 18th June.

www.ksrcbees.org.uk

Bob Smith, Julie Coleman and Adrian Davis