



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

Now that the cold and wintry weather has set in, there's not much to be done in the apiary – assuming you have anchored your hives down against the wind, protected them from woodpeckers, and treated them for varroa.

The colonies will use stores at a slow rate whilst it's too cold to fly, but do try to estimate the supplies available by hefting your hive. There's very little to lose by feeding additional fondant, provided you can get it close to the brood nest. From mid-February onwards,

some folk will be starting to stimulate their bees with syrup, or with pollen patties, so that the colonies are growing strongly by April, and can take advantage of early flowering oilseed rape. However, for less-experienced beekeepers, it would be wise to focus your time in February on making

sure that you have enough equipment, and a clear plan of action, to ensure that you are in control of the bees' instinct to swarm on strong Spring honey flows.

We hope that the cold weather will not discourage you from coming out to the first branch meeting of 2015 on Wednesday. We want

everyone to bring in their favourite gadgets, customized equipment or one-offs. More information on page 3.

At the end of February, Dover BKA have invited us to their Quiz Competition – volunteers

wanted (see p3).

And finally, just a quick reminder for those of you that plan to sit BBKA exams this Spring that application forms need to be submitted to KBKA this week. The branch meeting would be a good time to get the forms signed by a committee member.

Adrian

Next Meeting

Show and Tell – branch creativity

Whitefriars
Management Suite

Wednesday 4th

February

7.30-9.30pm

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

FEBRUARY 2015

DATES FOR DIARY

4 February	“Show and Tell – branch creativity” branch meeting, 7.30-9.30pm, in Whitefriars Management Suite, Canterbury CT1 2TF hosted by Chris and David
5 February	Submit application for BBKA module exams to KBKA exam secretary
21 February	BIBBA bee improvement for all, Elham Village Hall, Canterbury Rd, Elham CT4 6SX
22 February	Submit application for General Husbandry/AdvHus exams to KBKA exam secretary
28 February	Dover and District BKA – Quiz, Alkham Village Hall CT15 7BU 2.30-5pm
4 March	“Microscopy and Disease” branch meeting, 7.30-9.30pm, in Whitefriars Management Suite, Canterbury CT1 2TF with Jan and Adrian
7 March	Bee Trade Exhibition, Stoneleigh Park, Warks
16 March	Committee meeting, 7pm, The Old Gate Inn, 162 Dover New Road, Canterbury CT1 3EL
21 March	BBKA module examination day
11 April	First Apiary meeting of the season, location tbc
17-19 April	BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire

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.



SHOW AND TELL MEETING

Wednesday 4th February

Next Wednesday 4 February we welcome the membership to the Whitfriars conference room for a show and tell session. Just like in primary school, you are invited to bring along gadgets and tools which you have made or modified to make your beekeeping easier or more fun. We already have lined up a couple of oxalic acid vapourisers, a bee vacuum (to help them with spring cleanup?), a top bar hive and mininuc. We'd now like to see your original nuc boxes, your special crown boards, your feeders, your beesuit and anything else you think might interest us, even including those designs which, though brilliant in conception, nevertheless failed to achieve their objectives. Should your item be currently occupied by bees, please bring a photo on a memory stick.

The plan will be for each participant to spend a few minutes describing of their "thing", if they so wish, and afterwards discuss with members how it contributed to their beekeeping experience or otherwise. If you're uncomfortable about public speaking, just let us know beforehand, and one of the committee will take the role of presenter. Please email cantbees@gmail.com to confirm what you're bringing, so we can orchestrate a running order for the meeting.

David Cockburn

BEE IMPROVEMENT FOR ALL

One Day Event presented by BIBBA

Elham Village Hall, 21 February 2015



DDBKA, in conjunction with the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeding Association, have organised this one day event.

The purpose is to offer beekeepers the opportunity to learn about selecting their best colonies, and raising their own queens from these, to improve their own stock, and in the process inevitably helping to improve stocks of neighbouring beekeepers through the quality of the drones they raise.

It is now generally accepted that good locally raised bees are best suited to local conditions, rather than bought in, and (shudder!) imported bees. (the latter especially now that SHB has been confirmed in Italy).

This event is presented by leading authorities on the subject and is designed to be useful, interesting and relevant to all regardless of their level of experience.

Full details found by following the links on our [website](#)

Dick Bunting, DDBKA

QUIZ TEAM

DDBKA are also holding a competition for the Quiz Cup on Saturday 28th February in Alkham Village Hall CT15 7BU, from 2.30-5pm. Places are limited, and teams of up to 8 can enter. Non-beekeepers are welcome, as the quiz will only be 50% bee-related! I'm told that you can bring along alcoholic beverages, if that will increase the conviviality of the occasion. DDBKA would very much like to see a Canterbury team at the event, so please contact cantbees@gmail.com if you are available to take part.

Adrian Davis



NEONICOTINOID INSECTICIDE RESEARCH

Studies at LASI (U of Sussex)

Oil seed rape (OSR) is by far the most widely grown UK crop whose seeds have been treated with neonicotinoids. The flowers of OSR are visited by bees, and are now widely blamed for killing these bees.

The issue of neonics and bees is controversial, especially where field-realistic doses are concerned, with some studies showing that bumble bee colonies can be harmed or that individual honey bees can become disoriented. However, others suggest no correlation between honey bee populations and the use of neonics. The number of honey bee hives has been declining some years before the introduction of neonics approximately 20 years ago. Better data are needed on the amounts of insecticide present in the nectar and pollen in OSR, how much bees forage on this crop, and if and how this pesticide affects colony performance.

In one Sussex Plan project, using dance decoding and pollen analysis, researchers at LASI found that when bee hives were more than 1.5 to 2 kilometres from the nearest OSR fields they did not forage on OSR. In hives located less than 1 kilometre from the nearest field, dance decoding showed foraging in OSR fields of around 23% (i.e 77% of forager bees went elsewhere) and the pollen analysis showed that only 13% was from OSR. This shows that lab studies which assume that all the bee foraging was on OSR just is not realistic. Bees have a choice. Clearly, expecting a blooming OSR field to attract bees for miles around is not the case. OSR flowers in the spring when many other plants are in bloom.

LASI are currently carrying out a large project using 72 honey bee hives, half placed next to fields of OSR, (to maximize their exposure), the other half placed in nearby apiaries 1.2km + from the nearest OSR fields. Each hive has been fitted with a pollen trap to monitor pollen collection. Colony performance will also be recorded (amount of brood, weight gain, queen and colony survival). The aim of this project is to detect any harm from the OSR fields. They are also monitoring the performance of 72 bumble bee colonies in the same apiaries. Results to follow.



This project is being led by PhD student Nick Balfour with the help of LASI's research facilities manager, Luciano Scandian, PhD student Hasan Altoufailia, and Heloise Blanchard, a visiting French student completing her Masters degree.

Reference: Garbuzov, M., Schürch, R., Couvillon, M.J., Ratnieks, F.L.W. Honey bee dance decoding shows limited foraging on oilseed rape, a potential source of neonicotinoid contamination. **Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment** (accepted)

Original article published on LASI [website](#)

Accessed 30th January 2015

NATIONAL BEE UNIT

South Eastern Region Report 2014



Julian Parker's first full season as the South Eastern Regional Bee Inspector has completed, and he has written a comprehensive report of activities in Kent and elsewhere in the South East. Below I've provided the link to the full report; I've just pulled a few headlines to whet your appetite

- No reports of AFB in Kent
- Only 10 cases of EFB reported in Kent, focused in Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead/Forest Row area
- Reinforcement of the need for all beekeepers to register with BeeBase, in case of local disease outbreaks
- NBU's desire to recruit and train more Bee Health Advisors, to assist SBLs in triaging bee health issues
- NBU now part of "Animal and Plant Health Agency" (RIP FERA!)

You can find Julian's report at the NBU website here:

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1053>

And if you are not registered with BeeBase (and thus would not be alerted to any disease outbreak within a 10km radius of your apiary), please consider entering your details here: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/register.cfm>



LESS THAN 100 DAYS TO THE GENERAL ELECTION

Act for Nature

At the risk of stepping into controversial territory, I note that it is less than 100 days to the Election in May. Whilst manifestos have yet to be published, and the political/media classes seem to be obsessed about whether we have a 2-way or 7-way Election Debate on the telly (yawn), it seems reasonable to explore what the various political parties would do to improve Nature and the Environment – and therefore make a positive impact on Bee Health. We all know that the intensification of land-use has led to dramatic changes in bio-diversity, and that there are simple alterations to land management practice that could make a real difference to the local flora and fauna.

So, if a political party comes a-knocking, ask them about their plans to improve the local environment.

If you are unsure how to broach the subject, then why not take a few minutes to read up on the recently announced "Nature and Wellbeing Act" proposed by the RSPB and The Wildlife Trusts, along with a number of other well-known NGOs, including the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. This proposed piece of legislation would "put nature at the heart of how our country is run and bring about the recovery of nature in a generation".

The joint public campaign is asking politicians to 'act for nature' by pledging to include the Nature and Wellbeing Act in their manifestos ahead of the election in May.

To learn more about this interesting proposition, follow this link:

<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/naturewellbeingact>

