



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

The early Easter weekend disrupted my normal routines, so apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter. There's a lot of preparation work that was going on in March, so I will try to summarise what plans we've put in place for the branch this Spring.

Hopefully you have all realised that our first Apiary meeting is this Saturday at David's. Hopefully we'll be able to dodge any April showers.

On page 3 of this newsletter you'll see some information about our bee Safari on 2nd May. Please consider inviting Michael Cooper into your apiary – especially if he hasn't been to your place before. We've also found this is a good opportunity to establish our local neighbourhood beekeeping group schemes, which David Cockburn describes in more detail on page 4. We're also doing reasonably well at lining up

venues for the meetings through the summer, as you'll see from p2.

We're looking forward to developing a new apiary in Bekesbourne, and members of the committee have been busy raising funds (the Waitrose scheme looks like it will yield several hundred pounds), and we are in

negotiation for a large shed, which needs a bit of TLC. If you'd like to help out in relocating or repairing this shed please contact a committee member.

We're always keen for members to stretch their

beekeeping skills, so if you are interested in some study sessions with Julian to prepare for the BBKA Basic Certificate (or just want to take that assessment), contact Julian at cantbees@gmail.com. Finally, look out for an email survey of branch members to learn more about how we all keep our bees

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

APRIL 2015

DATES FOR DIARY

11 April	First Apiary meeting at David Cockburn's apiary
11 April	Central Association of Beekeepers lectures and AGM, Lambeth SE11 6DN
17-19 April	BBKA Spring Convention, Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire
25 April	Bee Market and Auction, Pulborough West Sussex
2 May	Bee Safari – a travelling apiary meeting with Seasonal Bee Inspector, Michael Cooper (see article below)
10 May	Yalding & District Honey Bee Fayre & Auction
11 May	Committee meeting, The Old Gate Inn, Canterbury, 7pm
6 June	Apiary meeting, Waldershare Park
7 June	Meet the public: Brogdale Strawberry Festival
4 July	Apiary meeting, tbc
19 July	Meet the public: Brogdale Cherry Festival
1 August	Apiary meeting, Stamford, near Folkestone
5 September	Apiary meeting, Bekesbourne
17-18 October	Meet the public: Brogdale Apple Festival

APIARY MEETING

Our first apiary meeting of the Spring is scheduled for 2.30-4.30pm on Saturday 11th April. The meeting will be held at David Cockburn's apiary, 34 Whitstable Road Canterbury CT2 8DQ.

David is looking forward to getting some assistance with his early season activities: we'll be manipulating some hives, doing a couple of shook swarms and part of a Bailey comb change, as well as queen marking.

Contact us at cantbees@gmail.com if you plan to join us, particularly if you are new and/or need to borrow a beesuit. You can also text Adrian on 07816 975286 to confirm attendance. If you like to wear gloves when the hives are open, please make sure you have a clean pair (Marigolds or surgical-type, as you prefer). No leather gloves please.

You will need to park on a side street off the busy Whitstable Road. Please try to share cars, to minimize the disruption to David's neighbourhood.



BEE SAFARI

Sign up Soon!

Our meeting on Saturday 2 May will be a safari - Michael Cooper, our local bee inspector, will tour around with CBKA to help with 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 Boughton-under-Blean, and toured through



Canterbury, Kingston, Barham, Hythe, and Stamford ending up in Sellindge – 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're very keen for new beekeepers to invite Michael, as it's a nice way to get some good advice from a professional beekeeper, particularly if you only have a small number of hives, and are unsure if your hives are doing well, or not.

We'd also hope that each of the neighbourhood 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 27th April, so please reply before then if you want to be a stop on the safari.

Adrian

NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUPS

2014 was the second year in which the Canterbury club ran a formal mentoring programme and it proved popular, with about 30 people benefiting from having local help in building up beekeeping skills.

For 2015 we have decided to expand our effort by encouraging 'improvers' to remain in the groups while still opening our arms to beginners. An objective will be to ensure that a good proportion of those who were beginners last year take and pass the 'Basic' exam this year, thus demonstrating that they have attained a certain level of competence. For beginners, each group will again organise its own programme of discussions, apiary meetings and visits to the pub. It is for this reason that we now call them 'Neighbourhood Groups'.

Should you wish to participate, and we hope you do, you should send me an email with Mentoring2015 in the subject line (dcockburn@eldaka.demon.co.uk) stating your location, whether you are a beginner, improver, mentor or mentee, if you have bees and number of hives. . Once we know the locations of those who wish to participate we will again assemble geographical groups, based on those of last year where possible.

David Cockburn

SWARM COLLECTION AND SUPPLY

2015 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.



We will organize ourselves similarly to last summer. Julian Audsley has again volunteered to act as swarm coordinator for the branch. Although the BBKA website offers a contact directory, 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!

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.

Whether you are a collector or a hopeful receiver, please make sure the information shown on the webpages is as accurate as possible – leave a reply if you need to correct it.

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. I've retained the list from last year, so please check the pages to ensure the contact details etc are up-to-date.

<http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/control/swarm-collectors/>

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.

<http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/control/bees-wanted/>

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

BEEKEEPERS @ KSRC

Courses in 2015

Beekeepers @ KSRC



As you probably know, the courses previously organised at Sittingbourne for "Improver Beekeepers" have suffered from lack of a home! The KSRC building on the Kent Science Park has new tenants and the equipment is in store. However, we have a new base location on the campus of the University of Greenwich, on the old Royal Navy Chatham Dockyard site. The tree-lined avenues and magnificent red brick buildings have been sympathetically renovated and have some impressive facilities, particularly the massive new library which occupies the full length (100m?) of the old Drill Hall.

Two courses have been arranged to confirm the suitability of this new venue, using the The Natural Resources Institute in Blake Building. One will be classroom based, the other will be using microscopes and, all being well, further courses will then follow (please let me know if there are particular topics you would like to see covered?).

Terry Clare will open proceedings with his popular "Introduction to Queen Rearing" course on Sunday 26th April. This full day course (10-4) will cover all you need to know to get started and is particularly aimed at beekeepers with a modest number of colonies, who wish to improve the quality of their stock. Terry is much in demand all over the UK and has strong connections to Ireland too; we are fortunate to be able to call upon his vast experience and expertise. This course does not involve work with the bees but there may be a follow-on course where these skills can be practiced.

The course involving the use of microscopes, on 31st May, will deal with that vital component of our bees' diet - pollen. I will lead a course where we carry out some basic botany to understand how flowers work and how bees get pollen back to the hive. Then, using Rex Sawyers book "Pollen Identification for Beekeepers", we will explore the characteristics of pollen and how these may be used to identify which plants have been visited. If you want to know where your bees go to forage when they leave the hive, this may be the course for you!

Both of these courses are bookable in exactly the same way as last year, go to the website at www.ksrcbees.org.uk and follow the links to the bookings page; convenient PayPal facilities are available (or bank transfer or cheque).

So, apologies for the rather late start this year but Beekeepers @ KSRC is up and running and we would be delighted to see you at the new venue....

www.ksrcbees.org.uk

Bob Smith, Julie Coleman and Adrian Davis

BEE MARKET AND AUCTION

25 April, Pulborough



The West Sussex Beekeepers' Association is organising a Bee Market and Auction for the benefit of its members and non members with beekeepers attending to buy and sell from a very wide area. The event will again take place at Chichester College's Brinsbury Campus in Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1DL on Saturday 25th April 2015. Auction details, Guidance Notes and the Entry Form are available to download from the WSBKA website - www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/auction.html . The Auction catalogue will be published online after 21st April.

For further details contact Graham Elliott of WSBKA : secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk or phone 01403 752493 Mobile 07761 349281

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Newsletter February 2015



As each year's National Honey Show draws to an end, the planning is underway for the next year. We have to be patient and wait through the winter for the bees to make their contribution, but not only do all you beekeepers continue with background preparations through the winter, but so, also, do your National Honey Show committee for the next Show.

As you know, our website is currently being redesigned and updated, watch for the new site which will be launched very soon: www.honeyshow.co.uk

The new, early, **National Honey Show leaflets and raffle tickets** for 2015 will be available to collect at the BBKA Spring Convention http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php. You can order them in advance for collection at either of those shows, or to be posted to you for your association or local show e-mail us at: nationalhoneyshownews@gmail.com letting us know how many of each you need.

Our planned programme for 2015 lectures will be Dr Deborah Delaney from the University of Delaware on Honey Marketing, Honey Bee Pests, Integrated Pest Management for the Small Scale Beekeeper and Why Genetics are Important to the Beekeeper. Dr Juliana Rangel from the University of Texas plans to talk about The Biology of Mating, of Swarming, and of the Colony. Ben Harden, NDB will be talking on Bees in Winter, and Professor Dave Goulson, University of Sussex, on Neonicotinoids, Bees and Politics, followed by Bumblebees, their Ecology and Conservation. Finally Professor Robert Pickard plans to tell us about Queens he has Known. These are the current plans, which will be consolidated as the Show draws closer.

The Friday Bee Craft Lectures will take place again this year, as will the Saturday series of lectures for those new to beekeeping, and/or just interested in the subjects. These will include Yearly Beekeeping Activities, Swarm control, Pests and Diseases and Products of the Hive for showing.

On the subject of showing, we hope you will continue to give our staging committee lots of work in 2015. Your superb efforts for 2014 entailed an overspill of the exhibit exhibition area into another hall – well done all !!! and please keep it up!

As we write this, in addition to the lectures from 2013, five videos from the 2014 lecture programme are now available to view on the National Honey Show YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/nationalhoneyshow>

Funding these superb, professional, videos continues to be a major challenge. We were grateful for some National Lottery funding in 2013 and for a generous grant from The Garfield Weston Foundation towards the costs in 2014. Our raffle will be making a contribution towards this venture in future years but it is very much on our wish list for us to be able to sustain funding the video programme. Do please watch and enjoy revisiting the videos. We have such a full programme of activities during the show that it is a major bonus that if you miss one of the lectures due to a clash of opportunities, you can catch up on missed lectures at a later date and at leisure. Please support our raffle, meanwhile we're busy trying to identify and apply for funding for 2015 videos ~ all ideas and input very welcome!.

As ever, the National Honey Show relies on a large team of volunteers, and all offers of help at the show itself are welcome. Do contact us, - you can e-mail the Show Secretary at showsec@zbee.com and he will pass your offer to the right person – if you can spare some time at the Show, it all helps.

We have a unique collection of displays, lectures and networking opportunities at the National Honey Show, and look forward to seeing you at the Show this autumn: Thursday 29th to Saturday 31st October 2015 once more at St Georges College, Weybridge.