



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

Another month has flown by, and those of you with established colonies will probably have dealt with the main challenges of managing the swarming instinct of your bees.

Hopefully your new queens are now laying - my notes tell me that my colony

established by artificial swarm with charged queen cells on 24 May was found to be egg-laying on my most recent inspection on 21 June. Whilst this colony won't be strong enough to make surplus honey this year, I'm hoping that by using the Demaree

method (see [June 2013 newsletter](#)) on colonies that developed swarm cells in June, I can maintain a strong foraging force for the July nectar flows.

I'm looking forward to visiting Sue Clapson's apiary next weekend to discover some of her secrets to producing top quality honey – Sue is a prize winning honey

exhibitor at both Kent and Dover Honey Shows, and clearly knows a lot about producing beautiful looking honey.

I have had an entertaining mailbag over the last month, which is reflected in this newsletter. From Beard Pioneers to friendly Floridan beekeepers, we meet all

kinds of people as beekeepers!

A small number of your committee having been working hard to help establish a new apiary in Bekesbourne. I particularly want to acknowledge David Cockburn's organization of

various small groups of people to make this happen. We are nearly ready to install the bees, just in time for a sweet chestnut nectar flow.

Finally, a reminder that we are meeting the public at Brogdale on 19 July – whether you want to sell honey, or can give a few hours to talk to the public, please contact us! Adrian

Next Meeting

**Honey Preparation
Sue Clapson's
apiary Herne
CT6 7BA**

**Saturday 4th 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 2015

DATES FOR DIARY

4 July	Apiary meeting, Sue Clapson's apiary, 51 Broomfield Road, Herne CT6 7BA Focus on honey preparation
10-12 July	Kent County Show, including KBKA Honey Show
13 July	Committee meeting, 7pm, Old Gate Inn, Canterbury
19 July	Meet the public: Brogdale Cherry Festival
1 August	Apiary meeting, Stanford, near Folkestone
31 st August	Kent Festival of Bees, Highland Court Farm, CT4 5HN Website: http://www.kent-festival-of-bees.co.uk/
5 September	Apiary meeting, Bekesbourne
19 September	Meet the public: BeeDay at Whitefriars
17-18 October	Meet the public: Brogdale Apple Festival
24 October	Dover Honey Show, Beech Grove, Nonington CT15 4FB
29-31 October	National Honey Show, St Georges College, Weybridge KT15 2QS website

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

The apiary meeting on Saturday 4th July, 2.30-4.30pm, will be at Sue Clapson's house 51 Broomfield Road, Herne CT6 7BA. We have asked Sue, who has regular success at honey shows, to tell us something of the techniques she uses to get her honey ready for the show bench.

Sue says "We have limited parking here but think we can accommodate six cars if we double up and park sensibly. Any extras will have to park on the road. We have a few garden chairs but if people could bring along a seat that would be helpful. The talk itself will not go on for long approx 45 mins with refreshments served afterwards. It is a home apiary so, looking in hives is probably not wise as the garden is also the talk location (under a gazebo in case of rain) and stressing out the hives will make the girls aggy. They are generally well tempered so the garden is usually safe and workable."

Just so we can get an idea of numbers, please email cantbees@gmail.com if you intend to come along. You should bring a deck-chair and mug. We aren't planning to open up the bees, but as ever, please practice good apiary hygiene – if you bring anything that relates to bees and beekeeping along, make sure it is clean. Sanitize hive parts or tools if they have been in contact with bees (e.g. with strong washing soda solution). Frames and comb should be treated with acetic acid vapour.

HAYFEVER SUFFERERS SEEK HONEY

(though the pollen in June is mostly grass)

Although I'm not a particular hayfever sufferer, I have noticed during the last couple of weeks that my bicycle rides are accompanied by streaming and sore eyes. Of course, June is a pollen count highpoint of the year, and many people think that local honey may be a way to reduce the uncomfortable symptoms of hayfever. The scientist in me is skeptical that the flower pollen content of good honeys will help with allergy symptoms brought on by grass pollen. Bees are rarely seen collecting pollen from grasses

(though corn may be an exception) because of its low nutritional value, but as grass pollen is in the air it gets into the hive and therefore can be found in honey too, albeit in small amounts. However, the placebo effect is real, and anything that helps relieve the itchy eyes, sneezes and general unpleasantness of hayfever is a worthwhile contribution.

Whatever the rationale for using local honey, I've had a number of members of the public email me about sourcing honey to help them with their hayfever. This is something that's a little hard to do – not many members sell honey via retail channels, and we don't maintain a list of shops and markets that sell members' honey. Most CBKA members offer their honey via our show attendance, garden-gate sales, gifts to family and friends etc. Generally, I will invite prospective purchasers to see us at our next BeeDay or Brogdale event. For more pressing requests, the question is "how to put people in contact quickly with local beekeepers"? For one or two requests, I'm happy to orchestrate by email, but it quickly becomes a chore.

I'd be happy to hear any ideas about quick, self-regulating ways to meet this intrinsically very local need.

Adrian



MEET A BEEKEEPER FROM FLORIDA

I've had a request from a beekeeper who lives in Florida to meet a local beekeeper while he is over visiting friends from 14-17 July. If you would be interested to swap a few beekeeping war stories with someone who keeps bees in a very different environment from East Kent, then please let me know, and I will put you in contact. You may be able to find out how to harvest orange blossom honey, or the best way to produce tupelo honey! (although I thought that tupelo honey was an album by Van Morrison). If you're feeling hospitable, drop me a line at cantbees@gmail.com



Adrian

KENT HONEY SHOW 2015

The Kent County Show is held at the Detling

Showground on 10-12 July this year. It includes a significant presence from KBKA, both in terms of demonstrations and information about everything apidological, but also is the home of the Kent Honey Show. The publicity for this event has been less than comprehensive this year, but if you fancy a day out you can read more about the Kent County Show [here](#), and more information about the Honey Show [here](#).

Adrian



BEKESBOURNE APIARY

Progress Report

As we've mentioned previously in this newsletter, we have an exciting new project underway with Chris d'Cruz and Sally Stonier, who have graciously invited us to set up an apiary in their woodland in Bekesbourne. Since the last newsletter, trees have been felled, and a shed erected, as you can see from the photos below. The Harbledown neighbourhood group even turned their work session into a barbeque event. There's just a little more work to do to make the shed secure, and watertight, and we are about ready to install a couple of beehives into the new location.



As David Cockburn has been discussing on our website forum, there are a series of regular jobs that will need doing, and we are hoping that plenty of people will volunteer to pick up a few inspections, such that no-one has to visit more than once per month during the season (April-September).



Look out for announcements about practical bee management, once we have the bees installed.

We'll also need to fill the shed with the various bits and pieces necessary to enable inspections of the hives. Whilst we will purchase the necessary boxes, foundation etc from association funds, if people have surplus equipment that they'd like to donate to the apiary, we'd be happy to hear from you. Our shopping list at the moment includes:

- Gloves (marigold, various sizes; medical gloves, long wrists)
- Hive tools (any pattern)
- Honey buckets (to store soda crystal solution and disinfect hive tools)
- Smoker
- Plant mister
- Large water container (jerry can or similar)
- Plastic containers with tight lids, various sizes
 - 17" (431mm) long to hold top bars
 - 14" (356mm) to hold bottom bars and foundation
 - 17"x9"x9" to hold assembled frames

Thanks to all those who have helped out so far – Chris Bailes, David Cockburn, Michael Roberts, Carl Smye, Maggie McKenzie, Ernest Snow, Norman Adams, Richard Kemball-Cook, Magdalene Mei Halkes, Martin Neames and of course, Chris D'Souza and Sally Stonier.



CANTERBURY MINI-SAFARI

On the value of neighbourhood groups

David Cockburn facilitates one of our larger neighbourhood groups, based in central Canterbury. They recently held a mini-safari – and here are a few notes on what they got up to.

David (facilitator) Back in May the Canterbury Neighbourhood Group had a get together in a pub to discuss what we hoped to get out of our group and the supportive activities. Two main themes, the freedom for beginners to phone or mail someone local when faced with a beekeeping quandary and the idea of having a mini-safari. The value of the club safari with Michael Cooper was recognised and members wanted to experience more of the same, also several members are interested in working up to taking the Basic and would like to get an idea of what was involved..

On June 13th therefore a group of about 8 members visited three apiaries in Canterbury. Each visit was structured in the same way so as to replicate the 'Basic'; the apiarist went through the hive/s describing what s/he saw while the audience made comments and suggestions.

In each case I was impressed by the level of knowledge exhibited, the quality of bee handling was also superior, apiary layouts were well considered and in my opinion all of the apiarists would have passed the Basic. It seems that as a club we are doing a good job of teaching beginners and getting them started with the craft. We do need however to be able to help where they have started off with a swarm by having available a supply of good quiet local queens available for requeening.

Catherine (novice beekeeper) Well, the group visit turned out to be perfect timing for me, and I'm hugely grateful for the friendly, knowledgeable and encouraging comments and advice I got that afternoon. I hadn't looked over more than the first frame when the unanimous conclusion was that my bees were about to swarm. So I closed it up swiftly, made a round of teas and took revision notes on how to go about an artificial swarm (which, fingers crossed, has worked a treat so far!). Having attended a couple of your association meetings at Whitefriars, sitting at the back listening to discussions on homemade contraptions and inter-association politics, none of which I understood at any level, I wasn't really convinced the association was going to be useful to me as a beginner setting up this summer. But meeting up as a neighbourhood group, and visiting other local bee keepers together is invaluable as a learner, and I do think should be at the heart of what you provide for members.

We are still developing our neighbourhood groups, so if you're not sure who to contact about them, just email David Cockburn at dcockburn@eldaka.demon.co.uk

CUMBRIA WILDFLOWERS

nice looking catalogue and newsletter



I received an email recently from Steve McClure, the marketing manager of Cumbria Wildflowers, who are a specialist wildflower supplier and contractor working across the UK. They own and operate a wildflower nursery on the outskirts of Carlisle, North Cumbria.

Their mission is to encourage landowners and people living/working in the countryside or in their back garden to think native and plant native plants. They offer the supply of seeds and plants with the addition of offering advice using 25 years' experience of managing land for wildlife. Contact by phone Chris, the Nursery Manager, on 01228 711282, visit their website at www.cumbriawildflowers.co.uk or email s.mcclure@cumbriawildflowers.co.uk

BEES WORTH MORE THAN THE QUEEN

Better headline than “super-sub bees”?

The University of Reading has recently published work that attempts to quantify the value of many species of bee as pollinators. Prof Simon Potts, who led the research, points out that whilst honeybees are in decline, we increasingly rely on other bee species – particularly the solitary bees - to ensure that UK crops such as oilseed rape, beans, apples and strawberries are fully pollinated. Interestingly, the “first eleven” of pollinators are fully pollinated. Interestingly, the “first eleven” of pollinators represents less than 2% of the available bee species in the UK – of which there are more than 250.

The Daily Telegraph didn't seem to appreciate the football analogy, so translated the original U of Reading press release (link [here](#)) into a rather more hyperbolic headline:

Bees contribute more to British economy than Royal Family

The Telegraph based their [headline](#) on the U of Reading's estimate for the value of pollination to the UK economy by all bees of £651 million a year, £150 million more than the Royal Family brings in through tourism. However, this seems to

somewhat detract from the major themes of the Insect Pollinator Initiative funded work. Fortunately other broadsheets reported the research more faithfully (e.g. the [Independent](#))

Prof Potts said “It is critical to protect a wide range of bees and other insects now so that, as Britain's climate, environment and crop varieties change, we can call on the pollinating species which are best suited to the task. We can't just rely on our current starting line-up of pollinators. We need a large and diverse group of species on the substitutes' bench, ready to join the game as soon as they are needed, if we are to ensure food production remains stable.”

With thanks to Magdalene Mei Halkes for pointing out the derived article in the “Daily Telegraph”.

KENT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Bye-laws Update

At the recent KBKA AGM in June 2015, a number of changes to the bye-laws of our association were approved. There's nothing particularly dramatic in them, but for the purposes of transparency, I've posted the current bye-laws and a list of the approved changes on our website. Follow [this link](#) to find out more.

Adrian

Just 2% of bee species pollinate 80% of our crops. But we can't just rely on this current starting line-up

BRITAIN NEEDS

Lasioglossum calceatum
Bombus pascuorum *Andrena dorsata* *Osmia bicornis* *Andrena fulva*
Andrena carantonica *Andrena haemorrhoa* *Andrena flavipes* *Andrena chrysoceles*
Bombus terrestris *Bombus lapidarius*

SUPER-SUB BEES

Andrena cineraria *Bombus hypnorum* *Andrena nitida* *Bombus ruderatus* *Lasioglossum malachurum* +200 OTHERS

We need a diverse group of bees in reserve, ready to join the game and secure our food supply

RESEARCH AT READING
Coming off the bench
#supersubbees

University of Reading



BEARD PIONEER NEEDS BEESWAX

Yes really!

Matthew Wood is a local beard pioneer based in Bridge who is looking into making beard balms, which apparently need beeswax (who knew). He'd like to use local beeswax, in part to help his back story, but also to support local businesses. If you'd like to be put in contact with Matthew, just send me a note to cantbees@gmail.com.

Beekeepers have a relatively high percentage of bearded men amongst their numbers, but perhaps need a few lessons in modern beardology.

"Beard Pioneer oils restore a beard's natural oils, moisturizing and conditioning both your skin and facial hair. Used regularly, Homecoming improves the appearance of a beard and helps prevent the kind of damage that can turn a beard into a scraggly mess. All the oils used to make Matthew's blend have been researched in our labeadtory (!), this has taken a long time of searching through history to the present day to find the right oils in the right quantities for the best results for your beard we use are hemp, avocado, castor, sweet almond and lanolin."

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/BeardPioneer>



DOVER MEMBER SEEKS APIARY

Hawkinge area

I've had a short email exchange with a member of DDBKA who's looking to relocate some bees. It would be inappropriate for her to use our branch apiaries, but with our extensive distribution of members, I'm confident someone will be able to offer assistance with an apiary site.

"I am contacting you with regards to a vacant place in the Canterbury apiary for one beehive. I am currently a new member of DDBKA but they have their apiary full so I am trying everywhere possible to find a place for my beehive. I am waiting for answers from a couple of local farmers (Hawkinge area) but because I need to relocate the beehive within two weeks from now, I need to speed up the search and widen my options. I don't mind becoming a member of Canterbury Beekeepers Association if required. Any tips or advice on farms you might know that are willing to accept a beehive would be much appreciated. At the moment my beehive is placed at Hawkinge Allotment Society in a copse area. I decided I will move it from there after an incident last year with a couple of people being stung and tons of regulation needed I'm order to continue keeping the beehive. It was just not practical nor functional working within the suggested guidelines hence my decision to relocate."

If you can help out, please let me know and I will put you in contact – cantbees@gmail.com

Adrian

BEE KEEPING

[Hawkinge Allotments Bee Keeping Guide.](#)



BEE CRAFT BEST BEE PHOTO

Weekly compilation on-line

BeeCraft colleagues, James and Dave, have been working on this new project and have launched a new online article that will be published each week. It's all about Beekeeping photos. We're going to collate the best beekeeping photos from around the web each week and post them on our website.

We're sharing because a) I think you will love the feature yourself as there are some truly amazing beekeeping photos shared through Instagram (a social photo sharing site) and b) because it is a great feature that associations and beekeepers will no doubt like and want to share.



You can find the main page if you click [here](#) - there are four weeks of photos already there for you to enjoy.

Wendy and the Bee Craft team



Adrian's note: there's quite an American bias to the Best Bee photos, but there are some good ones to be viewed. However, this photo of a stinging bee, which I found whilst preparing this newsletter, is the one that I liked. A bit gruesome, but it does explain why stinging a mammal is life-ending for a worker bee.

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 now christened 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. And more importantly, the laboratory and teaching facilities are of high standard and provide a good environment to learn more about beekeeping.

The focus for the next couple of months will be practical beekeeping skills and there are three courses with places still available

Practical Bee Handling, Saturday 4th July 2015, 10am-4pm at Coxheath, near Maidstone

Practical Queen Rearing – Monday, 13th July 2015, 10am-4pm at Kent County Show Ground, Detling Hill, Maidstone ME14 3JF

Practical Bee Handling, Saturday, 25th July 2015, 10am-4pm at Bridge, near Canterbury

All of these courses are bookable at our website www.ksrcbees.org.uk by following the links to the bookings page; convenient PayPal facilities are available (or bank transfer or cheque).

www.ksrcbees.org.uk

Bob Smith, Julie Coleman and Adrian Davis