



# CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Although May has not be particularly warm, there have been plenty of good flying days, and colonies have expanded rapidly, even if they weren't that big in April. There have been a good number of swarm reports, and several folks have contacted us about bees in their chimneys. The difficulties of recovering bees from chimneys should be apparent to all, and particularly if your bees are in a suburban area, preventing swarms is perhaps the most neighbourly thing you can do.

During our safari on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, we saw colonies in all stages of development, but fortunately very few with any significant health issues. There's a report on the safari on pp 3-4. Part of the reason for the safaris is to introduce new beekeepers to our local Bee Inspector, so that you will be confident to give him a call if you have concerns at any point over

the summer – though don't forget to get opinion from your local beekeeping neighbour group first, if you can.

Our next get-together is a more conventional meeting in Joan and Julian's apiary – there are lots of hives there, so there's always something interesting to do. Don't

overlook our second "meet the public" event at Brogdale on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June – in exchange for an hour or two helping out on our stand, you can get free entry to the Strawberry Fair. Contact Jenny or Maggie at

[cantbees@gmail.com](mailto:cantbees@gmail.com) for last minute sign-ups.

June is traditionally a time when forage can be scarce – if you have signed up for [BeeBase](#), then you will get email notifications if the bee inspectors consider there to be a dearth of stores in the colonies they see on a daily basis.

Adrian

### Next Meeting

**Waldershare Park  
Joan and Julian's  
apiary  
CT15 5BD**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June  
2.30-4.30pm**

Joining instructions  
– see page 3

## CBKA OFFICERS

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Contact Newsletter editor  
to contribute articles

**JUNE 2015**

## DATES FOR DIARY

<b>6 June</b>	<b>Apiary meeting, Waldershare Park, 2.30-4.30pm</b>
6 June	Annual General Meeting of Kent Beekeepers' Association at Lenham Community Centre at 11:30 am
7 June	Meet the public: Brogdale Strawberry Festival
<b>4 July</b>	<b>Apiary meeting, Sue Clapson's apiary, Herne Focus on honey preparation</b>
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
<b>1 August</b>	<b>Apiary meeting, Stanford, near Folkestone</b>
<b>5 September</b>	<b>Apiary meeting, Bekesbourne</b>
19 September	Meet the public: BeeDay at Whitefriars
17-18 October	Meet the public: Brogdale Apple Festival

## JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

The apiary meeting on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June will be at Waldershare Park hosted by Joan McAllister and Julian Audsley contact 0776 183 9119. As always make sure you wear freshly washed clothing and clean plastic gloves. No leather gloves may be used to handle frames.

### Waldershare Apiary CT15 5BD

From A2

Take the road to Coldred from the A2. Drive through the village and at the end of the green, turn right towards Eythorne along Church Road. Drive two miles and take the second road on the right at a very small crossroads which passes through gate posts into Waldershare Park.

From Eythorne

Take Coldred road and turn first left into Waldershare Park.

Drive about three hundred yards and on the right you will see the apiary just before a small wood.

Link to map: [here](#)

## 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. This is a brief update on how the planning for this is going.

#### *Fundraising*

Michael Roberts reports that we achieved donations of £325 from the Waitrose scheme, which will be allocated to setting up the apiary. We also have a bit of a war-chest from membership subscriptions, but any other easy-to-achieve ideas for raising funds to pay for equipment gladly received!

#### *Apiary Location*

Several members of the committee met with Chris and Sally at their beautiful woodland last weekend. The bluebells are now past their best, but still created a wonderful aroma. The woodland is largely a chestnut coppice with stems about 6-10 inches (150-250mm) in diameter. Chris plans to drop some trees to rejuvenate a coppice to make a clearing for the apiary, with space for a small shed/work area for essential beekeeping equipment. The committee (and any other volunteers) will be helping Chris clear out these trees over the next few weeks in June.



**MEASURING UP FOR A SHED**

#### *Installation of Shed*

The committee has been trying to find a hand-me-down shed for equipment storage. Jan Soetaert had a promising lead from his internet browsing, but in the end, though a large affair, the "Nurse's Shed" seemed rather too run down to be worth the modest consideration she wanted. Fortunately, the bee safari in May gave us the opportunity to discuss sheds with others, and Carl Smye has agreed to donate an unused shed.

The soil is chalk and flint and seems reasonably well drained and level at the site we picked. We laid out a design for a shed of about 8ft by 5ft with a covered verandah of about 8ft wide by 6ft deep in front of it. A further open space of about 10ft by 4-8ft out to the track in front would be cleared of vegetation and covered with a layer of wood/bark chips. Chestnut is of the same family as oak, and likewise its wood contains many tannins. This renders the wood very durable, gives it excellent natural outdoor resistance, and saves the need for other protection treatment, so we plan to rest the shed on a raft of harvested wood.

Carl and David Cockburn are now planning the installation, for which we will be seeking assistance from craftsmen and craftswomen of any level of skill.

#### *Provisioning of Bees*

Chris Baile "knows a man", so we will be able to stock the apiary immediately on completion of works, with at least two beehives. No doubt there will be continuation of vigorous discussions of the appropriate types of beehive pattern to use, but at least for this season, we will get started with the most commonly used – National boxes.

#### *Apiary Management*

We are several weeks away from having an operational apiary but David has started to think about how we will manage the bees, once installed. Regular inspections are essential, so we are planning to draw up a rota for weekly inspections. This is when we hope the membership will be keen to assist, so that the responsibilities can be shared amongst many, making it easy to keep the project going.

## BEE SAFARI REPORT

The safari on 2<sup>nd</sup> May was as ever, a long day for Michael Cooper, and the single hardy soul who visited all the apiaries. We began in Whitstable in



Norman's apiary. His hive was well behaved and although we found a couple of examples of larvae affected by sac brood, ("chinese slippers"), the

colony seemed strong enough to shake this off.

Next we went along to Ernest's two colonies, which took a dislike to Adrian! Ernest was part way through a swarm control technique, although it seemed that the old queen wasn't in the place we wanted



her to be. Michael gave some advice about continuing the process of managing the new colony, and hopefully there won't have been any actual swarming during May.

Maddie and Steve are some of our newest beekeeping members. They've recently installed a colony in their suburban garden, and have a nice set-up with netting to keep the bees high, and an easy-to-access hive. At the time we inspected it, the colony hadn't built up much, but there were no

reasons to think the colony was in poor health – just that some colonies start later than others.



Jan's colony was in a rural location, so after a nice tramp across a field, we saw his remaining colony (having lost one to vandalism during the winter). Jan had only recently replaced his queen, which had been leading a spiteful colony, but already there were signs of improved temperament. Because of his winter travails, he wanted to give a treatment for varroa – and after Michael Cooper had distanced himself from the action, Jan and David evaporated oxalic acid into the hive using a device built from a glow-plug and a car battery.



We moved down to Deal to look at Carl's bees. He had a number of vigorous colonies, and the only problem that Michael could foresee was a lack of space leading to congestion and swarming – so he recommended that supers were added, as soon as possible. Carl won the prize for “hive roofs least likely to blow off in a gale” – he's built some deep roofs with insulation, and made watertight with steel sheet from road signs. If you look closely at the picture you might be able to make out which ones.



The travelling group changed its personnel, as we moved over to Folkestone. We went to Lies' and were given tea and cakes. She had a number of concerns – one colony was Linda's which was temperamental and had not been properly looked at this year because of this. She had had a swarm which had been housed and another colony that seemed to be dwindling.

Linda's colony appeared queenless, was very lively and attempt to sting a bit but was controllable. However the only brood was 20-30 sealed worker brood laid 10 days or more ago. They were in a brood and a half. She had been trying to get them to go up into a 14\*12 which was largely foundation and just two partly drawn out frames. The bees were storing nectar in the half.

At the same time Linda noticed above Michael's head a palm tree with a swarm the size of a cast. That group went through the dwindling colony which I think was actually OK and raising brood.

They finally looked at the colony that the main swarm had come from and from which Elizabeth thought she had removed all but one queen cell. However on the marked frame we found close to the marked cell a group of heavily brace combed queen cells of which two had emerged and we released one more. The marked cell was actually dead. The hive was closed up to let the virgins sort themselves out.

I united the cast with the queenless colony by adding newspaper under a queen excluder and adding the 14\*12. The swarm was thrown into this and the cover board and feeder added.

I asked her to add a top entrance above the queen excluder in about two days time and to close the bottom entrance at this time if the colonies had united. This will allow the queen to go on mating flights and empty the bottom boxes. In at least 3 weeks time she can check for a laying queen in the top and then remove the bottom boxes.

We went to see Mick then and his Warre hive. The bees were good but he had not used starter strips or a wax bead on the top bars and as a result the bees had built comb across the frames preventing them being examined. There was an empty box at the bottom and two full boxes on top. Not a lot of bees but with brood apparent. Michael suspected the colony had become congested and had decided to swarm. We advised him to replace bottom box with one with starter strips.

With such a large geographical area to cover, we ask a lot of Michael Cooper to cover so many apiaries in a day- but he's always generous with advice as well as his time, which was appreciated by all. Thanks also to the apiary owners for letting us descend, occasionally in large numbers, to inspect your bees!

Adrian and Julian

## WEEKEND COURSE

### The Ecology of Pollination

I am writing from the Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education about an upcoming weekend course that may be of interest to you and your members. I was hoping you might be able to pass the below information on to your group to encourage them to sign up. It would also be great if you were able to mention the course on your website and social media channels (@Cambridge\_ICE). I would really appreciate it.

### Weekend course: "Bees, flies and flowers: the ecology of pollination and why it matters" 26 – 28 June 2015.

Are you worried about the plight of wild bees and other pollinators? These insects provide a crucial service pollinating crops and wildflowers. Yet there is widespread concern about their decline. This course will teach you how to identify and monitor common pollinators such as bumblebees and hoverflies, how to measure their importance to flowers, and how you can contribute to pollinator conservation.

You will learn to assess your own garden for its value to pollinators. You will try out practical techniques used in pollination ecology, including preparing a pollen sample for microscopic examination and measuring insect behaviour. Expect to go home with an entirely different view of flowerbeds and road verges. The course is taught by Dr Lynn Dicks, Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge Department of Zoology. Lynn has a PhD in the ecology of pollinating insects, awarded from Cambridge in 2002 and has continued to work as a



science writer and broadcaster for 10 years. She is keen that as many people as possible notice and enjoy the diversity of wild pollinators that busy themselves around us every summer.

This weekend course takes place at the Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education's home, Madingley Hall, over the weekend of the 26 – 28 June. The course costs £250 which includes lunch & dinner over the weekend, refreshments, and tuition. It is also possible to stay at Madingley Hall's B&B over the weekend at an additional cost starting from £50 per night, subject to availability. If you would like to sign up or would like more information about the course, please visit <http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/bees>

I hope this course is of interest to you and your network. Please let me know if you are able to forward the information on. Feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Kind regards

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## 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](http://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](http://www.ksrcbees.org.uk)

Bob Smith, Julie Coleman and Adrian Davis