



# CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

## EDITOR'S NOTES

It's good to be interacting with our bees again! The two bank holiday weekends in May have, atypically, featured beautiful weather, and it's good to be in the sun with the bees buzzing. Can you pick out the lower pitch

of flying drones yet? Even if the colonies are not quite as strong as we are used to having at the end of May, swarming is definitely underway. In last month's newsletter, we exhorted you to have your swarm

control plans ready to go. Later in the newsletter, Julian explains how one technique can be used for queen raising and/or swarm control.

If you need more equipment, Julian points out that [Maisemore](#) have a stock clearance: national hives £14 and supers £9 roof £15.

The association calendar is getting busy through June

and July, firstly with an exciting opportunity to visit the cathedral – see p2 for the joining details. We also have a nice program of events to meet the public, promoting beekeeping, and bee-friendly activities – and hopefully sell plenty of honey. Please try to find a few hours to help out

manning our stands at Whitefriars, or Brogdale.

In between the monthly apiary visits, the mentor groups are meeting regularly. Dave Cockburn reviews early progress on p4, complete with an excellent portrait photo by Benjamin

Lee. You can see more of Benjamin's photos on our website gallery – and if you have some good photos of your own to share, send them to [cantbees@gmail.com](mailto:cantbees@gmail.com) and I will put them up for all to appreciate.

Adrian

## CBKA OFFICERS

**Chairman:** Julian Audsley

Briar House  
Waldershare Road  
Ashley  
Dover CT15 5JA  
0776 183 9119

**Treasurer:** Joan McAllister

42 Canterbury Road  
Lydden  
Dover CT15 7ER  
07824 668042

**Secretary & Newsletter**

**Editor:** Adrian Davis

24 The Grove  
Deal CT14 9TL  
07816 975286

**Committee Members**

Chris Bristow  
Michael Roberts  
David Cockburn  
Chris Bailes  
Maggie McKenzie

The easiest way to contact us is via the website, but you can also e-mail

[cantbees@gmail.com](mailto:cantbees@gmail.com)

Contact Newsletter editor to contribute articles

## JUNE 2013

A newsletter for friends and members of Canterbury BKA

## DATES FOR DIARY

2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2013	Honey stall at <a href="#">Fete of the Blean</a> at Canterbury High School. Kent Wildlife Trust organized. Includes family activities, local food and drink, music, Morris men (inc a CBKA member!), and even a conference exploring the history, archaeology and wildlife of the Blean Woods
8 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Visit to hives in the Cathedral's Deanery, including a tour of private areas, and afternoon tea
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
6 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Visit to Richard and Caroline Charnock's orchard apiary in Preston
12-14 July 2013	Kent County Show, Detling (includes KBKA honey show)
13 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
20-21 July 2013	Brogdale Cherry Festival
3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2013 (tbc)	Apiary inspection and honey extraction demonstration, Westbere
17 August 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
24-25 August 2013	Brogdale Cider Festival
21 September 2013	Bee Day at Whitefriars
19-20 October 2013	Brogdale Apple Festival
22 October 2013	Thanet BKA quiz night

## APIARY VISIT IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 2.30pm

Thanks to the good offices of Chris Bristow, we have been able to arrange an apiary visit to the Deanery, within the Cathedral grounds on 8<sup>th</sup> June. This will be a "normal" apiary visit, with inspection of the bees, but there will also be a tour of Deanery gardens followed by tea. Bring a donation towards the tea, as well as your veil and clean gloves (disposable, no leather gloves please). Chris will need numbers (for the gatehouse, and teas) so I would ask that members and friends confirm attendance by [Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June](#) - email him direct at [cb@corkscrewcentral.com](mailto:cb@corkscrewcentral.com). There is limited parking in the precinct, so we suggest using public parking. Chris will email any special instructions on confirmation of attendance, but when you get to the main (Christ Church) cathedral entrance, ask for directions to the deanery for the beekeeping visit. He will be by the entrance to the deanery to guide people in. Hopefully we all know where the cathedral is, but just in case [here's a map!](#) Any last minute changes of plan will be handled by Chris, on 07872 928138. Don't forget to email [cb@corkscrewcentral.com](mailto:cb@corkscrewcentral.com), by Wednesday evening, 5<sup>th</sup> June, to confirm your attendance.

## APIARY NOTES

JUNE



They keep telling us that it's been the coldest spring for thirty years. I think we have seen the impact of that with the flowers coming so late and the generally slow build up by the bees. However we are now in a time of swarming. I have already seen eggs and larva in queen cups in the stronger colonies. We have collected one swarm and hopefully we will soon get more for those who need them – just make sure they are not from your hives.

The best way to prevent swarm preparations is to ensure you have sufficient supers on the hive and continue to give space in the brood area so the queen has room to lay. This may mean taking out excess combs of food/pollen or giving the queen access to a super or another brood box if on a standard national frame size.

If raising queens now is the time to properly assess your current queens for the properties you need. Gentleness and docility, no chalk brood, low varroa levels, reluctance to swarm etc. The easiest method for raising new queens is a Demaree. This can be used either to suppress swarming or to raise queens. It will work whether the colony is raising queen cells or not, providing the colony is strong and ready for swarm preparation i.e. full, plenty of stores, drones and queen cups. Ideally the colony will be on two brood boxes but can be done of a full brood chamber and introducing extra frames, preferably drawn but can be foundation.

Find the queen and place her in a Queen cage or matchbox. Use a spare brood box to sort the comb so that any comb containing eggs or open larva is in one box with one full frame of pollen and make up the rest with sealed brood and place the rest of the frames in the other box. Ensure there are no queen cells with eggs or larvae in this second box. If you start with only one box then most of the brood can be in the top box and any gaps filled with drawn comb or foundation but place one frame of open fully developed brood in the other. Place this box on the floor and release the queen into it. Add the queen



excluder and then add the supers (minimum 2) followed by another queen excluder and then the other brood box with open brood. Illustrative photo is from [UEA beekeepers](#)

Any nurse bees in the bottom box will make their way to the upper brood box. Because the queen has no access to this upper box pheromones will not be effective in suppressing swarming and they will raise queen cells. Examine in 5 days time and remove any queen cells found in the bottom box – usually there will be none. In the top box either remove all queen cells or if you want a new queen reduce cells to one open cell and place a floor with an entrance under the top box in place of the queen excluder. This colony will now raise a new queen which can be used to replace the old queen or to create a new colony. The bees in the bottom box will usually not raise any queen cells and if all queen cells have been removed the top box can be used as a super and allowed to fill with honey and be extracted in the normal way.

Julian

## MENTORING

### Canterbury Mentoring Groups

As a beginning beekeeper I found it pretty intimidating to stand in front of a hive full of roaring bees wondering what they were up to and what I should do next. I still feel uncomfortable if my carefully planned actions don't appear to fit with what the bees are doing. So while it is particularly important to be in a position to call for the help of a more experienced beekeeper in the early days it is also valuable later.

Most of us feel inhibited in calling for help from a stranger who may well be busy at the time and who hasn't given specific permission to do so. This is a particular problem if the only beekeeper you've really met lives 20 miles away.

The BBKA has noted the large number of people who take up the hobby, start out full of enthusiasm and then give up after a couple of years. In our own association we have very few who are very experienced, a somewhat larger number with 2-5 years behind the veil and a large group in their first full season.

In order to make the most of the experience we have, and to address the needs of those needing support, we have set up five geographically defined mentor groups covering our area of East Kent. Each group has at least one experienced person and up to half a dozen beginners.

Our mentor groups have all now met 1-3 times; they've done apiary visits, handled bees, carried out a Bailey comb change and dealt with queen cells. They've discussed in detail what is happening in their hives and what to do next. We've drunk a lot of tea and eaten some delicious cakes.

The swarm season has been delayed this year and many colonies were lost in the long and intermittent winter so we have people with an empty hive waiting patiently for their first bees - and a lot more waiting impatiently. The colonies are now building up well despite the continuing miserable weather; folk are starting to do splits, and the availability of swarms will not be too long delayed. The mentor groups provide a mechanism for ensuring needed colonies get to those in need of them and then supporting them in the vital first few months.

If you are not yet participating in the mentor groups, here's a list of the areas covered, and the group leaders. Email [cantbees@gmail.com](mailto:cantbees@gmail.com) to be put in contact:

Canterbury/Faversham	Chris Bailes/Dave Cockburn
Deal	Adrian Davis
Herne	Michael Roberts
Folkestone/Ashford	Dougal Hendry
Womenswold	Julian Audsley/Joan McAllister

Dave Cockburn

Thanks to Benjamin Lee for the great photo of Dave lighting up in his toolshed!



## MEET THE PUBLIC EVENTS

### Brogdale and Whitefriars



Last summer we made our first concerted efforts to go out and tell people about bees, beekeeping and all the wonderful products of the hive. Whilst we didn't produce as much honey last year as we would have liked, these events give us all access to a ready and willing market for "artisan honey", which the general public enthusiastically buy. As you will see from the diary of events, we are continuing with the successful "BeeDays" in the city centre, with the support of Whitefriars. Jenny Cotterill is coordinating this series of activities. These are typically 10-4pm events, and we are looking for volunteers to help out for a few hours – talking about the observation hive, gardening for bees, selling some honey and generally passing on our passion for bees.

We will also be attending the [Festivals at Brogdale](#) again this year, starting with the Cherry Festival, July 20-21. Julian Audsley and Chris Bristow will do some lectures, and we need people to help man the stand: Maggie McKenzie will coordinate the "rota". We will run a number of sessions during the day and normally have two people on duty at a time. You will be able to attend all the festival events – the tours of the cherry trees being especially worthwhile. Please let Maggie know when you are available over the two days and whether you can do morning or afternoon sessions (email [cantbees@gmail.com](mailto:cantbees@gmail.com)). We also need to know if you can help set up on the Saturday and arrive by 9.00.



For events at both locations we will also send separate emails about a week before the event itself, but please try to make time to help out at one or more of these enjoyable "days out".

Jenny Cotterill / Julian Audsley

## EAST KENT ASSOCIATIONS

Here's a quick digest of what the other local associations are doing over the next few weeks.

[Whitstable and Herne Bay](#) have a meeting focusing on extracting and processing honey and hive products on 29<sup>th</sup> June, in their teaching apiary at the University of Kent's Canterbury campus. [Dover and District](#) are meeting in Eythorne on 29<sup>th</sup> June, the beginners led by Mary Hill at 1pm. The main meeting at 2.30pm will focus on checking how increase/build-up has been dealt with, and whether there's any honey. [Thanet beekeepers](#) are taking beekeeping to the public at the Garden and Homes event at Quex Park on 15-16<sup>th</sup> June.

Adrian

## COURSES AT KSRC

The course series for Kentish beekeepers continue. There are still spaces available for

Bob Smith's course on "Varroa - a fuller story", which will be on Sat 1st June. There's a day dedicated to foulbrood diseases on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June – field identification in the morning, followed by a lab session practicing microscopy of the causative organisms in the afternoon. Mary Hill will repeat her "how to pass the BBKA basic examination" on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Go to their [website](#) to find out more, and make bookings.



BBKA BUSINESS



The British Beekeepers Association

## Card Cock-Up

If you are a member of BBKA, then you should have recently received the June 2013 edition of BBKA news, together with your new membership card. If you look closely at the latter, it is confusingly dated 2012/3. BBKA head office has just issued the following message, by way of apology:

*The 2013-14 Membership Card has been circulated to all members; however, despite several proof readings it went to print with the wrong date, 2012-13. We are not in a position to reprint and re-circulate the cards. However the 2012-13 card is valid until 2014. All benefit providers have been advised of the printing error and when shown the card will honour any benefits offered. A letter for allotment holders and others in need of confirmation is posted within the Members Area of the BBKA website.*

*Please be sure to circulate this information to all members and accept my sincere apologies for this error.*

*Yours faithfully*

*Jane Moseley, Operations Director/General Secretary, BBKA*

## Neonicotinoid Update

From Dr David Aston, BBKA Chairman

In our 2 May 2013 statement we undertook to keep you up to date on developments with neonicotinoids. The European Commission has now published the Implementing Regulation to restrict the use of neonicotinoids. It is Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 of 24 May 2013 and was published in the Official Journal on 25 May 2013. Its full title is 'Amending Regulation (EU) No 540/2011 as regards the condition of approval of the active substances clothianadin, thiomethoxam and imidacloprid and prohibiting the use and sale of seeds treated with plant protection products containing these active substances'.

It can be downloaded using [this link](#)

The main elements of the regulation are as follows:

- Restriction in the use of three neonicotinoids; 1. clothianidin, 2. imidacloprid, and 3. Thiametoxam for seed treatment, soil application (granules) and foliar treatment on bee attractive plants and cereals.
- In addition, the remaining authorised uses will only be available to professionals.
- Exceptions will be limited to the possibility of treating bee-attractive crops in greenhouses, in open-air fields only after flowering.
- The restrictions will apply from 1 December 2013.
- As soon as new information is available, and at the latest within two years, the Commission will review the conditions of approval of the three neonicotinoids to take into account relevant scientific and technical developments.
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A longer article will appear in the July issue of BBKA News.