



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

As I write this, rain is hammering on my window, and wind is whistling down the chimney, and it still feels more like November than late January! Many of you will have treated for varroa, and perhaps will be fretting about your colonies' use of stores in the unseasonably warm weather. If you do decide to take some preventative action, moistened bags of sugar are just as good as fondant. Before you do crack open a hive, monitor it for a few days with a dropboard. The pattern of dropped cappings and sugar will tell you in how many seams your bees are active. If you have any concerns there will be plenty of time to chat at our first meeting of the new year next Wednesday at Whitefriars. David, Jan and I will look at varroa and control techniques for both the winter and active seasons. Those of you who are registered with the National Bee Unit's BeeBase will have

Next Meeting
Varroa Control
Whitefriars
Management Suite
Canterbury CT1 2TF
Wednesday 3rd
February
7.30-9.30pm

received a request to update your records by 12th Feb. On page 6 there's an explanation of why this is important – we should all participate.

In early March we are looking forward to hearing about treatments to reduce sensitivity to (bee)stings from Dr Stewart of Medway Maritime Hospital. We are

hoping to get quite a few visitors from neighbouring BKAs so, just for this meeting, we are moving to Barham Village Hall. We are making a considerable investment of time in setting

up the branch apiary in Bekesbourne. Over the next few newsletters we will be encouraging you all to participate in apiary inspections. Martin Neame will lay out the activity plans, and will be looking to get commitments for everyone to help out at least once. His introduction starts on p4. There's more branch news on pp3-4 of this newsletter.

Adrian

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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 2016

A newsletter for friends and members of Canterbury BKA

DATES FOR DIARY

Wednesday 3 February	CBKA branch meeting, "Varroa Control", 7.30-9.30pm, Whitefriars Management Suite, Canterbury
Friday 5 February	Applications for BBKA module examinations must be sent to KBKA examination secretary
Sunday 21 February	Application for BBKA General Husbandry/Advanced Husbandry assessment must be sent to KBKA exam secretary
Tuesday 1 March	Introduction to Beekeeping course starts, Julian Audsley, 6 evenings at Barham Village Hall, 7-9pm
Wednesday 2 March	CBKA branch meeting, "Sting de-sensitization", Alasdair Stewart (Medway NHS) 7.30-9.30pm, Barham Village Hall, Valley Road, Barham, Kent CT4 6NX
Saturday 5 March	Bee Tradex, 9am-4.30pm, Stoneleigh Park, Warks, CV8 2LG website here
Thursday 10 March	CBKA committee meeting, 7-9pm, Old Gate Inn, Canterbury
Saturday 19 March	BBKA module examination day (location tbc)
Wednesday 6 April	CBKA branch meeting, "Swarms, casts and control", 7.30-9.30pm, Whitefriars Management Suite, Canterbury

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.





BRANCH NEWS



BBKA Basic Certificate coaching

If you have kept bees for a couple of seasons, you will likely have enough experience to successfully navigate the assessment for the BBKA basic certificate in beekeeping. Julian Audsley is planning to run a few coaching sessions to help members prepare for this assessment. The Basic Assessment [syllabus](#) can appear daunting at first glance but closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things which all beekeepers should know. You will have covered much of the material in Julian's introductory course, and hopefully are already practicing the knowledge on your own bees. The assessment is completely practical/oral and takes place mainly at the hive in a local apiary. It's a structured way for all of us to improve our skills and knowledge in the craft.

If you are thinking about taking the Basic this summer, or would like to find out more, please contact Julian ASAP to express interest, or to get more details. Email: julian100@btinternet.com

Swarm Collection

If you've been a member for a year or more, you will know that we offer a swarm collection service and match-making service to remove swarms from where they are not wanted, and to put them in the hands of beekeepers looking to start up or replenish their apiaries.

Over the last couple of years, the BBKA "find a swarm collector" website has been broadly adopted by most of the local branches in East Kent. We've discussed the CBKA approach for 2016, and decided that we will make sure that all of our swarm collectors are listed on the BBKA site (link [here](#)). Note that you cannot nominate yourself to this list: it has to be done through branch secretaries. I have not yet received the official communication from BBKA

Office for "signing up", so look out for a separate notification about that in the next few weeks.

We will continue to offer swarm match-making services to our members, via the website mechanism we've established over the last few years. Julian has graciously agreed to be coordinator for these swarm re-homing services.

Committee minutes

CBKA is an association operated for the benefit of its members. Not everyone can attend each and every meeting, and we want there to be a continuous dialogue throughout the branch to keep everyone informed and engaged with our activities. For example, we are already developing our summer programme of activities, and would be delighted to hear from others who would like to participate in events.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, we have now started to publish CBKA committee minutes on our website, for all members to review. This will give you a better insight into what's coming up/going on, and hopefully will stimulate more discussion. Any comments gladly received – ideally on the branch's discussion forum pages [here](#). If you want to make comments in private, then you can always email cantbees@gmail.com

To access minutes and use the forum, you must have [registered](#) to use the branch website. [Logging into](#) the website gives you access to all the information about CBKA, the most recent newsletters, and other branch services such as swarm matchmaking, Bekesbourne apiary management, honey sales services etc.

January 2016 committee meeting minutes [here](#)

December 2015 committee meeting minutes [here](#)

BEKESBOURNE APIARY

In preparation for the coming Spring activities, Martin Neame, in his role as apiary manager, has been thinking carefully about the best ways to manage the apiary as a **branch activity**, i.e. not relying on just one or two individuals. We will likely have several branch meetings at the apiary through the summer.

Over the coming weeks, Martin will explain the plans in a little more detail, but here's the essence



- We want to inspect the hives weekly during the active season
- We will keep good records at each inspection
- At least two people will be present at each inspection
 - the lead (who has beekeeping experience, and will decide on any immediate actions)
 - the assistant (who will participate fully, and make sure records are kept)
- The apiary manager will organize the duty roster, but will expect individuals to arrange swaps, if an allocated session is no longer convenient

We are expecting that with about 20 inspections required through the season, if everyone participates, then just a single session per member should cover the whole season.

At the moment Martin is drawing up more detailed guidance notes, and will be working with Adrian to use our website to make all the information, scheduling and other record keeping easily available via computer and smartphone.

What we need now from all CBKA members is enthusiasm to sign up for, and participate in the inspections, and also to engage occasional site management work-parties.

BEES 'N BEANS

The eponymous project, Bees 'n Beans aims to look at pollinator populations across the UK, with the help of Citizen Scientists. Growing three broad bean plants and performing a simple pollination experiment (involving net bags, and a bit of manual help for some flowers!), will allow scientists at University of Sussex to compare yields of beans from across the country, and see if the bees are doing their job.

This year they are asking volunteers to try growing beans both in 3L pots and in their garden soil, to see if the need for pots can be removed from the protocol, and if this helps with the robustness of the plants.

You can find out more (and sign up) at <http://www.ljbees.org.uk/>. In previous years, this project "sold out" very quickly, as it is scoped for 500 participants. If you are interested in other citizen scientists' projects from the University of Sussex, browse on over to the BuzzClub

<http://thebuzzclub.uk/>





WINTER STUDYING

Application for BBKA modules

You'll need to submit application forms (from [here](#)) to sit the BBKA examination modules to Sharon Bassey of KBKA by 5th February, to ensure she gets you registered. The actual examination(s) will be on 19th March.

If you are considering the General Husbandry or Advanced Husbandry assessments, applications need to be with Sharon by 21st February.

The application forms need to be counter-signed by a branch officer, so our meeting next week would be a good opportunity to collect the appropriate ink-mark!

More details of the syllabus for each paper can be found at [this link](#). A recent improvement is the free availability of past papers, for all BBKA members (this [link](#)). If you are interested to know more, or perhaps are thinking of studying for a module, please contact Julian Audsley (julian100@btinternet.com) or Adrian Davis (cantbees@gmail.com).

If you are interested in doing the Basic Certificate in apiculture, just let Julian Audsley know, as this will be arranged during the summer months, and Julian is thinking of running some coaching sessions later in the Spring.

KBKA exams secretary
Sharon Bassey
61 Nunhead Lane, London,
SE15 3TR
sharonbassey@outlook.com

SEASONAL BEE INSPECTORS

Changes in Personnel

You should have all received an email pointing you to the Annual report by the South-Eastern region's bee inspector. If not, the link is [here](#). The whole report makes for an interesting read, but I will mention just a few key facts that you should have at your fingertips.

We have a new Regional Bee Inspector – Diane Steele, who has taken over from Julian Parker, who's moving westwards to be RBI for the Southern Region. Diane has been working in Sussex as a bee inspector for some time, so is simply extending her range and responsibilities.

Kay Wreford is joining Michael Cooper as one of two seasonal bee inspectors for Kent. Kay is a very knowledgeable beekeeper, who has been active in Medway Beekeepers for many years. Kay will be taking North Kent (roughly OS Explorer map 149/150) whilst Michael will focus on South Kent (OS Explorer maps 137/138). The impression I have from a brief conversation with Diane is that the ranges will be a little fluid as the new team beds in. Whilst we are out of season, any issues with exotic pests or other beekeeping concerns should be directed to Diane; Michael and Kay begin their work on 1st April.

Diane Steele

Regional Bee Inspector, South Eastern Region; Email: diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Mobile: 07775 - 119452

Kay Wreford North Kent 07775 – 119483

Michael Cooper South Kent 07775 – 119451





PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL HIVE COUNT

The National Bee Unit needs YOU to update your records!

The UK is committed to taking action to improve the state of our pollinators and recently published strategies set out how, by working together, we can ensure a thriving and sustainable pollinator population.

One of the first things we need to do is to improve our current understanding of our honey bee population – how many there are and how healthy they are.

NBU are doing this by launching an annual [National Beehive Count](#) from the winter of 2016/17 onwards. The idea is to estimate the number of beehives going into winter dormancy. In order to work out the best way of estimating the number of bee hives (colonies) in the UK, a smaller, pilot count is taking place during the winter of 2015/16. For the pilot, NBU propose to use the information on beehives numbers held on BeeBase and other sources to derive our estimate of the national count.

This will also support the European Commission in its project to understand the state of beekeeping across the EU and as a mechanism to allocate funds to support the beekeeping sector from 2020 onwards.

NBU are asking all beekeepers to help by updating existing information about their beehives by **12 February 2016**. NBU would like to record the number of overwintering hives so please update your BeeBase figures to reflect the number of beehives within your apiaries as of 1st November 2015. Using this date will help us ensure consistency across the country by reflecting the national position at a single point in time. If for any reason you are unable to update your records before this date, your response will still be counted and will feed into autumn's Hive Count.

If you have been visited by a bee inspector you should already have a record on BeeBase. Use [this link](#) to login or register with BeeBase.

CBKA committee strongly encourages all members to register and maintain a record of their apiaries with BeeBase.

Please could you update or add any new contact details and apiary records, including how many colonies you own. NBU's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) provide guidance on how to do this. If you have any other questions not covered by that document, please don't hesitate to contact NBU by:

Email: nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk telephone: 0300 3030094

The project is led by the National Bee Unit and supported by Defra, the Welsh Government, Scottish Government, DARDNI, British Beekeepers Association, Welsh Beekeepers Association, Scottish Beekeepers Association, Bee Disease Insurance (BDI), International Bee Research Association, and the National Diploma in Beekeeping.

- [The National Pollinator Strategy](#);
- [The Healthy Bees Plan](#)
- [The Action Plan for Pollinators](#);
- [Honey Bee Health Strategy for Scotland](#);
- [Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee](#).



WSBKA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough, West Sussex

9.30am to 4.30pm Saturday 27th February

The West Sussex Beekeepers' Association is pleased to invite beekeepers and those interested in bees and beekeeping to the WSBKA Annual Convention. The event is designed to suit beekeepers of all standards. As well as the main lectures, the seminars offer a choice of more specialised topics. The main speakers are **Celia Davis**, **Peter Sutcliffe** and **Norman Carreck**.

Celia is the widely-respected author of the books *'The Honeybee Inside Out'* and *'The Honeybee Around and About'*. The title of Celia's main talk is *'The World of the Honeybee Queen'*. She will also be presenting a seminar *'World of Scents'*.

Pete has worked tirelessly for the BBKA in a number of roles and until recently was a BBKA Trustee. His main talk is on *'Colony Nutrition'* and he is presenting a seminar on *'Beekeeping Myths'*.

Norman is a research scientist, Science Director of IBRA and works alongside Professor Ratrieks at the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects at the University of Sussex. He will be giving a main talk on *'What future for local bees in Britain?'*

There will be other seminars to choose from - *'Insecticides – Facts and Myths'* by Bartholomews Agri Foods Ltd; *'Soap Making'* by Liz Ready; *'Bees Need Plants, Plants Need Bees'* by Pam Hunter and *'Exploring Queen Problems'* by Roger Patterson and Jim Norfolk.

Refreshments and a simple lunch will be included and there will be many opportunities to catch up with fellow beekeepers. Paynes Southdown Bee Farms are returning and will bring a range of equipment and books to sell and so there is plenty of opportunity to spend as well!

Full details and a booking form can be found on the WSBKA website. £25 entry fee. We hope as many of your members as possible will join us.

www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk/convention.html

Contact Gordon Allan for further details on 01798 343470 or email wsbkaconvention@gmail.com