



# CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This month's newsletter comes due whilst I am on my holiday, so it's a bit shorter than usual.

Although we've been basking in warm temperatures both at home and abroad (in my case), we should be finishing the honey

harvest, and starting to get bees ready for the winter. The warm weather, with honey taken off, is an ideal time to apply an Apiguard treatment (2 trays, 2 weeks apart) – if your varroa drop indicates that you have a significant build-up of the vector of bee deformed wing virus.

A flurry of honey shows happen in late September and October, which is a gentle challenge for any beekeeper wishing to improve their skills in honey preparation.

Other signals that the season is at a close are the impending deadline for entry for BBKA written exams – if

you are interested you should start thinking about this now, as entry forms need to be submitted to the KBKA exam secretary by 23<sup>rd</sup> September; the exams are sat on 12<sup>th</sup> November, which is "only" eleven weeks away, if you are developing a study schedule.

A full service will be

restored next month, but in the meantime I hope to see lots of you at our last outdoor meeting of the year next weekend.

Adrian

### Next Meeting

#### Apiary Visit

#### Saturday

3<sup>rd</sup> September

2-4.30pm

Joan McAllister's  
apiary

Waldershare Park,  
near Eythorne CT15

5BD

Joining instructions

See p2

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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

## SEPTEMBER 2016

A newsletter for friends and members of Canterbury BKA

## DATES FOR DIARY

<b>Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September</b>	<b>CBKA branch apiary meeting, 2-4.30pm Waldershare Park</b>
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	CBKA committee meeting, Old Gate Inn, 7-9pm
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Closing date for applications for autumn BBKA exams Contact KBKA exam secretary ( <a href="#">details</a> )
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> September	Thanet BKA Honey Show, Acol Village Hall. Entries by 22 <sup>nd</sup> Sep, entry form and schedule <a href="#">here</a>
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> September	East Kent Ploughing Match, Nonington 9-4pm
<b>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Branch indoor meeting, TBC</b>
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	"The Close up World of Bees and Bee related Pest Diseases & Disorders" with Simon Croson. 8pm at Detling Village Hall, Kent ME14 3EY. Free entry, MidKent BKA
15-16 October	Brogdale Apple Festival, demonstrations and stall
Saturday 22 October	DDBKA Honey Show, Beech Grove, Nonington
27-29 October	National Honey Show, Sandown Park ( <a href="#">details</a> )
Saturday 7 November	KBKA Education Lecture, Prof David Goulson and Mr Phil Stevenson (talk titles tbc) Lenham Community Hall
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	BBKA examination day ( <a href="#">details</a> )

## APIARY MEETING

Waldershare Park, near Eythorne CT15 5BD Link to map: [here](#)

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2-4.30pm

We hope that many of you can join us at Waldershare Park this coming weekend. We will be the guests of Joan McAllister, one of our most experienced members. There are lots of colonies in this apiary, and even more experience to draw on. We will talk about the preparations to be made at this, the beginning of the beekeeping year.

Normal apiary hygiene rules apply – so please bring clean bee-suits, clean disposable gloves (no leather gloves), and wellington boots. If you need to borrow PPE, please let us know ASAP, so we can try to get a spare suit in the right location!

### **Directions 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.

### **Directions 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.



## BRANCH NEWS



### Meet The Public

Three cheers to Michael Roberts and Dave Cockburn for their dedicated effort to make the second Whitefrair Day on 27 August possible and successful. Jan, Ernest, Maggie and Magdalene also joined in to support the day. We had many interest from the public, sold lots of honey and learned something about how to be better in labelling our honey to avoid confusion on raw Honey and national honey. Inspired by Norman last time in Brogdale Cherry Fair, Jan upped the game by bringing in a gift boxed complete frame of honey, with explanations at the box, exceptionally professional. The gift box did not stay with us for very long and went home with a very excited customer.

The Brogdale Apple Fair is next in October, who will rise up for the challenge? We need helpers and honey to cover two days of show-and-tell over the weekend 15-16 October. In exchange for a couple of hours of your time, you get free entry to the Apple Fair. Even if you can't commit time, we would be delighted to have your honey on the stand for sale (with the usual small commission for branch funds). Contact Maggie MacKenzie at [maggiemckenzie@vfast.co.uk](mailto:maggiemckenzie@vfast.co.uk) to volunteer, or for more information.

### Bekesbourne Apiary

We have now been running the apiary in Palmsted Wood for six months on a multi-person rota, and it's worth reflecting on the successes and areas for improvement. The Apiary inspection duty rotation has gone very well. Beginning in April this year, every Saturday has seen two people allocated to the duties of Lead and Assistant. There have been a few substitutions, but overall, each Saturday has been covered by at least two people. There does appear to be some strain on the system when the duty days coincide with Bee days of which there are a few. More thought needs to go into how this is managed for next year.

The apiary management team of 21 members new and old, led by Martin, are to be congratulated on a good first year running the club apiary. This despite the efforts of some of the bees to make the

job as unpleasant as possible. The major problems have now been overcome and we have some decent colonies which have produced over 40lb of honey for sale. The next step is to ensure we have fat, healthy bees going into the winter and then we can turn our thoughts to planning how we will do even better next year and really have a club apiary we can be proud of.

There are at least two main that we need to reflect upon, to make them go better. Communication from week to week, especially on the expected follow-up to hive management actions, can be improved. And the general topic of record-keeping can probably be made easier for a large group – we have several approaches: paper, the CBKA web-forum and BeeBase, and this provides a degree of complexity that needs to be thought through.

### Honey Shows

The beekeeping diary for the next few months is dominated by a succession of honey shows. These are always enjoyable events, and even if you are not showing honey, beeswax or our cakemaking skills, they are a good opportunity to join in a rather traditional type of event, where beekeepers congregate to compare notes and see what the best honey (or candles or cake) looks like.

Thanet Beekeepers lead off with their show on 24<sup>th</sup> September. Entry forms should be returned to Bill Yeoman by 22<sup>nd</sup> September (details [here](#)).

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the East Kent Ploughing Match will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> September in Nonington. More information from their website: <http://www.ekpma.co.uk/>. Download and print off a Show schedule, if interested:

[ekpma – honey show Sept 2016](#)

Entries should have already been submitted, but it's worth checking with the show secretary. CBKA will be supporting this event with the usual beekeeping stall, joint with Thanet and Dover.

Dover and District are next up, with what is often quite an impressive honey show on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, in the impressive wooden hall of the Bruderhof Community in Nonington. Canterbury members

have often done well at this event, so why not pick out your best pots of honey or beeswax, and enter? There is discussion of showing a super frame of honey from the Bekesbourne apiary, such is the quality of the cappings we saw at recent inspections. The show schedule and entry form should be available shortly.

And finally, the National Honey Show takes place from 27-29 October. It's being held in a new, larger location this year – Epsom Race Course. The honey show is impressive in scale and quality but perhaps not worth a trip on its own. However, there are lots of lectures, classes and workshops to entertain and inform. This year there are two professors of apiculture from the USA – Sue Cobey and David Tarpey, plus an ex-president of the Irish Beekeepers association (FIBKA), amongst other knowledgeable and more local experts.

<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lectures-and-workshops.php>

## Mid Kent Bee Photography Lecture

🐝. MID KENT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION are having a talk on: 🐝

*"The Close up World of Bees and Bee related Pest Diseases & Disorders" with Simon Croson.*

8pm Tuesday 11th October 2016 at Detling Village Hall, Pilgrims Way, Detling, Kent ME14 3EY  
Free entry

Simon has kept bees for just over 10 years in which time his photography has been awarded across all levels, including 2 Apimondia Gold Medals and numerous awards at Honey Shows. Simon will provide some tips and techniques to allow others to follow suit. He is travelling from Lincolnshire to speak to us.

You are welcome just to turn up on the evening, but MKBKA would appreciate an E Mail or phone call for catering purposes.

Sue Chartier, Secretary Mid Kent Beekeepers Association. [susanchartier@hotmail.com](mailto:susanchartier@hotmail.com) 01622 861333

Directions : from Maidstone or M20 junction 6, take A 249 Sittinbourne direction, turn next right ( across A249) to Detling Village, follow road left into village, turn left at pub The Cock Horse Inn and hall is on the left. Parking in hall car park or on road before hall.

## WHY DO SOME SUNFLOWERS TRACK THE SUN ACROSS SKIES?

The dance of the sunflower reveals a sophisticated ability to exploit its environment.



A field of domesticated sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) fully in bloom is a striking sight. The large and showy flowering heads face east, positioned toward the rising Sun. The heads of young sunflower plants follow the sun during the day, then reverse course at night so they're ready to face the dawn. Following the Sun is a process known as solar tracking or heliotropism. But no one knew how much of an advantage the plants gain from their daily routine, or why they cease to track the sun once they have bloomed.

To find out, Stacey Harmer at the University of California, Davis, and her colleagues tethered some young plants so they couldn't move, and rotated the pots of others so they were facing the wrong way in the morning, away from the sunrise. They found that leaves of both groups of sunflowers were about 10 per cent smaller than leaves from plants that were allowed to follow the sun. "They're less efficient if they can't track," says Harmer.

To understand why sunflowers in bloom stop moving and face the rising sun, the researchers rotated some sunflowers so they were facing west, then recorded how many bees and other insects visited the plants.

The east-facing flowers received about five times as many pollinators as the west-facing ones, probably because they were warmer, which attracts pollinators. "You can see the bees going crazy over the east-facing flowers and mostly ignoring the west-facing flowers," says Harmer.

Whilst the technical detail is too complex for a branch newsletter, the authors of this recent *Science* paper provide mechanistic insights into this tracking phenomenon and postulate an evolutionary link to pollination.

*Science* 05 Aug 2016: Vol. 353, Issue 6299, pp. 587-590, DOI: 10.1126/science.aaf9793

Acknowledgement: *New Scientist* for some of the words and picture.

BEEKEEPERS @ KSRC  
Courses in Winter 2016/7

Beekeepers @ KSRC



Through the winter, Beekeepers at KSRC will repeat its very successful "Improver Key Skills" course. It's a five session course as follows:

The five sessions can be booked together for £25 (non-refundable). Topics that will be covered:

- Bee & colony life-cycles, reading the colony, translating that into management actions
- Swarm control – an in-depth understanding of natural swarming, and its prevention
- Managing varroa – the key to healthy bees; monitoring and treatments, inc. non-chemical.
- winter management
- Health and Hygiene

We plan to hold the course both in East Kent (10 January – 7<sup>th</sup> February), as well as a November course (1-29 Nov), at Tyland Barn near Maidstone. The more local course will be at the The BeeBarn - the training centre that is part of Bee Equipment's facilities at Highland Court Farm in Bridge, near Canterbury. It has a modern, well-equipped meeting/lecture room, with room for 35 delegates.

All these sessions are not intended for novices; our target audience is definitely "Improvers" - those who have kept bees for a season or two and are keen to learn more, to improve their understanding and management of their bees. So, if you are interested, bookings may be made from the KSRC website - [www.ksrcbees.org.uk](http://www.ksrcbees.org.uk)

Bob Smith, Julie Coleman and Adrian Davis

## AND FINALLY...

Beekeepers are well known for the variety and strength of their opinions on most topics. However we feel about a topic, it's always good to try to see things from the opposite side. A recent article on <http://wired.com/> brings together our favourite topics of varroa (boo), bee inspectors (hurrah), Big AgroChem (boo) and anti-corporate environmentalism (boo?). This is a long article about a Mormon-scientist-beekeeper who's trying to be ethical... Jerry Hayes

A SWARM OF CONTROVERSY: IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST KILLER MITES,  
BEES GET AN UNLIKELY ALLY: MONSANTO

<http://www.wired.com/2016/08/jerry-hayes-how-to-save-the-bees-monsanto/>

by Hannah Nordhaus 28.08.2016