



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

With dry and reasonably warm weather through much of April, many colonies have thrived and grown substantially. The first swarm collection I heard about was on the 16th April in Canterbury, but no doubt there were others. When we were in Stanford for our first apiary meeting of the year, we were able to make up two nuc colonies from a mother colony which was full with bees, honey and queen cells. Read more about our adventures at Debbie's apiary on p4. Over the May bank holiday weekend, we were called out to help a member in Westmarsh who had recovered one swarm from a bush, but another was 7m up a pine tree at the end of a branch. In this situation, we tried "swarm whispering" using a chemical lure. We also had the opportunity to take away some emerging queens, to practice making up mini-nucs, in advance of

the branch's queen rearing project, which we intend to start next weekend. An outline of our project is given on pp4-5. We've already taken a first preparatory step – rehoming the top-bar hive in Bekesbourne into a more conventional (easier to manipulate) hive pattern.

We have two exciting branch events this month.

First up is the Bee Safari, with our local SBI Kay Wreford. Full details are given on p.3. We visit a number of apiaries during the day. Everyone is invited to come out and support the branch – either at your nearest apiary, or for the hardier souls, you could tag along all day.

The next activity is our first meet-the-public event of the summer on 27th May. As part of Canterbury In Bloom, we'll have a stall at Whitefriars, where we can talk about beekeeping, show off an observation hive, and sell honey. Volunteers to help staff the stall should contact [Michael Roberts](#). Adrian

Apiary Meeting

Bee Safari

Taking in apiaries from Faversham to Finglesham

Saturday 6th May

10-4pm

Join us when and where you can

Details on p3

CBKA Officers

Chairman: David Cockburn
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Committee Members

Julian Audsley
Simon Daniell
Magdalene Mei Halkes
Maggie McKenzie
Michael Roberts
Jan Soetaert

The easiest way to contact us is via email using the links above, but you can also use the contacts page on the website.

Contact [Newsletter Editor](#) to contribute articles

MAY 2017

A newsletter for friends and members of the Canterbury branch of Kent BKA

DATES FOR DIARY: yearbook at <http://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/calendar/cbka-list/>

Thursday 4 th May	Committee meeting, 7-9pm, Old Gate Inn
Saturday 6th May	Apiary meeting (bee safari), with SBI Kay Wreford
Saturday 27 th May	Canterbury in Bloom – meet the public in Whitefriars, 10-4pm
Saturday 3rd June	Apiary meeting (queen rearing), at Palmsted Wood, 2-4pm
Sunday 11 th June	Brogdale Strawberry Fair – meet the public at the National Fruit Collection
Thursday 22 nd June	Canterbury Young Farmers visit: host David Cockburn, location tbc, 7-9pm
Saturday 1st July	Apiary meeting (honey flows) at Waldershare Park, 2-4pm
Wednesday 5 th July	Committee meeting, 7-9pm, Old Gate Inn
7-9 July	Kent County Show: KBKA Honey Show at the Showground, Detling
Sunday 16 th July	Brogdale Cherry Festival – meet the public at the National Fruit Collection
Saturday 5th August	Apiary meeting (location tbc) 2-4pm

You can get our calendar, either as a google calendar (cantbees@gmail.com), or for other programmes using this URL: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/ical/cantbees%40gmail.com/public/basic.ics>



From our April 22nd meeting:

Dougal presenting a rather beautiful broodcomb from one of Debbie's hives (Debbie is obscured by Dougal's thumb!)

Picture by Magdalene

BEE SAFARI

Our meeting on **Saturday 6th May** will be a safari – Kay Wreford, our local bee inspector, will tour around with Canterbury Beekeepers to help with spring inspections, check for disease and answer any husbandry questions. It's a packed day, so we will be on a strict timetable, so that everyone can spend some time with Kay.

The timetable is still subject to a little flux, so I will send out a final confirmation on Thursday this week. At the moment, the schedule looks like this:

Beekeeper	Address	Start	duration	Location
David Bridgford	Info removed for website	1000	30	Information removed for website edition
Magdalene Mei Halkes	“	1100	30	“
Kyriakos Tsafaras	“	1145	45	“
Lunch break	“	1230	30	“
David Wells	“	1315	15	“
Martin Neame	“	1400	15	“
Janet McDonald	“	1430	30	“
Anne and Julian McIlroy	“	1530	15	“

If you read this on or before 6th May, contact Adrian to get the location information.

The safari is a bit of a logistical challenge, so it would really help if you could let me know which apiaries you will join us at. Just one, or all seven is fine – and if you can arrange to carshare, it might be a little less like dodgems when we move! Email cantbees@gmail.com with your intentions.



BRANCH NEWS



Palmsted Wood Apiary

A small group of us gathered on 8th April to prune back, move and cut up logs, and generally create some more parking bays along the track at Palmsted Wood. Chris and Sally were in attendance to direct proceedings, and by moving a number of logs there's plenty more space for vehicles now. Chris had arranged with a neighbor to bring along a farmer's mower to knock down the undergrowth, so things were looking good the following weekend. The committee have been keeping an eye on the bees, and on the 23rd April, an artificial swarm was performed on a strong colony. Although we'd "supered up" the previously weekend, the bees were more inclined to reproduction, so we now have an additional colony!

We've also taken the decision to move bees out of the top-bar hive. The colony in that hive is doing



well, and would be well suited to providing bees for our queen rearing programme. So we prepared for re-homing on Friday evening by moving the TBH away from its usual location, and building an empty hive in place. This allowed us to bleed off the flying

bees on Saturday morning to help us with the process of transferring frames.

Whilst the top bar frames are the correct width to sit on the rails of national pattern hives, they are much deeper than standard top bars, so we rewired as much comb as we could into standard frames. We also created a deep box (two supers), to hold the remaining Top Bar frames with their brood/stores. A

roof went directly onto this, because the topbars sit proud of the box – the intention being that the brood will emerge, and we can sacrifice these combs later in the season.



Apiary Meeting Report

Debbie showed off her quiet bees on a chilly and cloudy Saturday (22nd April) with three experienced beekeepers - Julian, Adrian and Dougal - to share their skills. Her six hives (all 14x12) were happily colour coded which were very welcoming.



The first two hives she opened were angels, the queens were doing a good job and the workers were still on the combs, minding their own business. When we came to the third hive, Debbie said this was a swarm she collected last year from a relative and she thought the bees were not as calm. This colony was a dream colony for learning with a massive numbers of bees when she opened it. As Debbie examined the frames one by one she found a textbook capped supercedure queen cell in the centre of the second frame she inspected and found the queen on the next frame. It was artificial swarm demonstration time. Dougal quickly helped to set up a nuc, put the queen in along with a few frames of brood and workers. It was amusing that I

got stung twice on my legs while helping Dougal to make space in this nuc and no one else around did. Debbie found many queen cells of different stages on at least three other frames, so another nuc was set up, this time with the first found capped queen



cell and a few frames of brood and workers.

In the original hive, Julian advised to knock out all other capped queen cells but one young

uncapped. Two new beekeepers got to take the nucs home. One of them only has a national hive so Dougal and Adrian had to give them lots of advice on how to transform the 14 x 12 to national frames.

The meeting was a fantastic hand-on learning experience. There were lots going on and lots to look at, not a quiet moment at all. Debbie suddenly had cramp in her hands so Julian and Dougal both took over to continue opening the other hives, allowing the new beekeepers to have a chance to handle a few frames. Debbie kept a record file for her hives so she referred to it every time she was asked a question.

When we finished she invited us into her very modern house to have tea and freshly brewed coffee with biscuits and cakes. That was a treat. I had another treat before I left. I watched two little lambs running towards their mummy for a feed in the field next to the house. I would call this day the best ever Apiary visit. Please come along to our next apiary meeting.

Magdalene Mei Halkes

Queen Rearing Programme

Given that we have some colonies of good strength in the Palmsted Wood apiary, we are now making preparations to start queen rearing. We plan to use a cupkit method to collect larvae from Angelic donor colonies, and raise these into queens in a double brood box colony that we will establish in the apiary. Jan Soetaert has been busily purchasing and

assembling equipment for this project – with the funds from National Grid, we've acquired 6 Maisemore polystyrene nucs (for



overwintering colonies), 10 apideas (for mating queens), as well as the bits and pieces necessary to confine a queen into a cupkit, and then transplant the laid-up cells into the cellraiser colony. It looks like we may be doing the first egg harvest from a donor colony in mid May, and we hope we might get more than one cycle of queen rearing.

Basic Assessment in Bee Husbandry

For many beekeepers, the first recognition of their proficiency is the Basic Assessment. This is generally organized in a local apiary, with a county examiner (not from our branch), making a friendly assessment of your skills in the principal areas of beekeeping. We encourage everyone with a couple of years' experience to take the assessment. Julian Audsley has offered to run some sessions to run over the essential elements of this practical skills assessment. Please drop Julian an email if you want to be considered this season – typically the assessments would be done in the June-July timeframe. Email:

introductory.courses@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk

THE 2017 SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOW

Is at Ardingly, West Sussex RH17 6TL during the **8th, 9th & 10th June**

This year, displays within the Bees & Honey marquee will be marking the 50 years of SoE shows by presenting aspects of beekeeping spanning those years ... highlighting both how much and how little has changed.

All this will be in addition to our hourly Demonstrations of Beekeeping, Observation Hives, Display of the Honey Show Benches, Honey and Hive Product Sales, Equipment Sales and Information Stands.

All this of course can only be possible with the tremendous help we receive from many individual members of Associations and Divisions throughout the south east of England.

We would be very grateful if you could once again forward or otherwise distribute this message and attachments to your Association's or Division's committee, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster and ultimately, **to all your members please.**

The Bees & Honey Show event is an extremely popular visitor attraction staged within a marquee at the annual South of England Show organised by the South of England Agricultural Society. SEAS is a registered charity whose aims are to showcase farming, agriculture and the countryside ... **aligned with the charitable aims of the BBKA, its Associations and Divisions.**

- The Bees & Honey Show provides a perfect venue for introducing and informing a public eager to understand more about honey bees and beekeeping; by meeting, talking with and watching live demonstrations of beekeeping practices provided by beekeepers from throughout the region. **Could some of your members help by passing on their passion for beekeeping to an enquiring public?**
- The Bees & Honey Show provides a perfect venue for Associations and Divisions from throughout the South of England to promote themselves to potential new beekeepers and members amongst the shows many visitors, and to advertise their own beekeeping 'Taster Day' or 'Introductory Courses'. **Can you provide promotional posters or flyers about your Association or Division for display and distribution at the show?**
- The Bees & Honey Show stands within the marquee include our Honey Sales stall, from where jars of honey, cut comb, and other products of the hive provided by Associations, Divisions or individual beekeepers are offered for sale on their behalf, with a modest sales commission donated to SEAS. **Could you or your members provide stock to be offered for sale?**
- The Bees & Honey Show provides an excellent opportunity for beekeepers throughout the South of England to practice, develop and maybe hone their skills at preparing Competition Entries for the Honey Show Classes. **Members are warmly invited to take part in the competitive Classes.** Download the Honey Show Schedule ... [SEAS-Bees-Honey-leaflet-2017-WEB.pdf](#)... the Honey Show Entry and Honey Sales booking form ... [SEAS-Bees-Honey-booking-form-2017-WEB.pdf](#) ... or visit ... <http://www.seas.org.uk/info/competing/competing-south-england-show/bees-honey/> for full details. Show entry registration is open until 3rd June, but get your entries in NOW.
- The Bees & Honey Show organisers welcome offers of help or participation as stewards, with free entry to the entire South of England Show and time off the Bees & Honey stewarding duties to walk around the show-ground.
- **On these topics and for other general enquiries**, please contact us at beesandhoneyinfo@gmail.com

We invite your members to drop in to the Bees & Honey Marquee during the three days of the show, to say hello, see what we are doing and to perhaps visit the **Paynes** stand for some early summer equipment purchases.

Printed copies of the Bees & Honey Show Schedule are available upon request.

Do please contact me if you have any queries, would like more information, or wish to offer any assistance with the successful running of the show

Regards

Richard Bradfield, Vice Chairman
Bees & Honey Show Committee
07923 600266

