



# CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

## EDITOR'S NOTES

I seem to have used up all my good material in the articles for this month's newsletter, so the editor's column is sparse. Hopefully I'll see many of you at David's apiary. If you can't make that, then Maggie McAllister and our "Meet the Public" team would be delighted if you could help them out at the Brogdale Strawberry Fair on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June. Entry is free if you help out on the stall, and you'll have plenty of time to enjoy the strawberry-based fun! Please contact Maggie McKenzie at [shows@canterburybeekeeper.org.uk](mailto:shows@canterburybeekeeper.org.uk) as soon as possible.

Adrian

### Apiary Meeting

#### At David's

34 Whitstable Road, Canterbury  
CT2 8DQ

**Saturday 3rd June**

2-4pm

Details on p2

### CBKA Officers

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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

## JUNE 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/>

<b>Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June</b>	<b>Apiary meeting at 34 Whitstable Road, Canterbury CT2 8DQ, 2-4pm</b>
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> June	Brogdale Strawberry Fair – meet the public at the National Fruit Collection
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Canterbury Young Farmers visit: host David Cockburn, location tbc, 7-9pm
<b>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July</b>	<b>Apiary meeting (honey flows) at Waldershare Park, 2-4pm</b>
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> July	Committee meeting, 7-9pm, Old Gate Inn
7-9 July	Kent County Show: KBKA Honey Show at the Showground, Detling
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	Brogdale Cherry Festival – meet the public at the National Fruit Collection
<b>Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August</b>	<b>Apiary meeting (location tbc) 2-4pm</b>

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

## APIARY MEETING

We are meeting at David Cockburn's apiary on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2-4pm, at 34 Whitstable Road, Canterbury CT2 8DQ. There's no parking directly outside David's house, so aim for Westgate Court Avenue, just around the corner. We will discuss our queen rearing successes, and areas for improvement. Our bees in Bekesbourne are still in need of temperamental adjustment, which we hope can be achieved with some recently emerged queens. As ever, usual apiary hygiene rules apply, so bring clean bee-suits, and no leather gloves, only disposable or washable Marigold types. If you need to borrow a suit, please let us know beforehand.



### Swarm Photos

May is always the peak time for swarms – some of which are easier to recover than others. Here are two swarms that fell into our laps! On the left is a swarm moving into David Cockburn's bait hive in the roof of his garage. We think that the orangey bee just to the left of the entrance hole is the queen. On the right, settled under a garden table in Wingham, is a swarm that is now homed in Adrian's apiary.



## BRANCH NEWS



### Meet the Public

We had a good Club turnout to support the stand at Whitefriars for the first day of Canterbury in Bloom on 27<sup>th</sup> May. Steve Gough, Dave and Jan helped set up our display and Maggie, Magdalene and Ernest helped out during the rest of the day. The morning was marred by torrential rain which kept the shoppers away, but by midday the sun had come out and the punters came to take a lively interest in the observation hive, prepared by Julian and occupied by his bees, which was the focal point for many a discussion about bees. There is an enduring fascination to getting up close and personal with 'scary' insects, that slight feeling of risk even when we guarantee they can't escape, the reward of a 'friends of the bees sticker' for the children, who bring their parents into the conversation.

We gave away books on bees as well as nasturtium seeds and sold £322 worth of honey of which £77 went to Club finances. We may even have recruited several potential beekeepers. We can mark this down as a very successful event, made possible by Michael Roberts' dedication, and his small band of enthusiasts.

Our next opportunity is at the Brogdale Strawberry Fair on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June – Maggie McKenzie would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to help out (and get free entry to the Fair!) email:

[shows@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:shows@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk)

### Apiary Meeting Report

Having never been on a Bee safari/ inspection before I was slightly apprehensive as to what to expect, imagining at worst a kind of Ofsted school inspection with an intimidating inspector. Well the day thankfully put paid to both those illusions - our inspector Kay Wreford is wonderfully friendly, patient and helpful and the day proved to be extremely informative and helpful. We visited 7 apiaries in total and it was amazing to just see the various set ups

and the different surrounding foraging and temperaments of the bees - from rural to urban and with many different crops and foraging areas. Kay took time to inspect each apiary, alert to noticing signs of disease but at every venue giving careful advice on set up and care of the hives and handling. If this had been the equivalent of bee Ofsted then I'm sure I would have been put into special measures: not only are my bees the grumpiest out, but I had QCs which needed dealing with, and had even managed to set up the hive with my broodbox upside down! But even in all this Kay was extremely helpful; many thanks to Adrian who stayed behind to help me sort out all that needed to be done.

All in all it was a great day, and made me realise how fortunate we are not only to have such an experienced and helpful Bee Inspector in Kay, but also the support of fellow group members in our local group.

Janet McDonald

### Palmsted Wood Apiary

Our bees at Palmsted are still unwelcoming, and like to follow people around the apiary and generally make a nuisance of themselves. The queen rearing project described below is trying to produce some new queens with better characteristics, but as yet, we are not happy taking inexperienced beekeepers (or indeed anyone who doesn't like a sting) into the apiary. Hopefully we can resolve this through the summer.

For the braver beekeeper, we have had some opportunities to practice some of the more advanced skills. Martin made up three apideas with the virgin queens harvested from an apiary where swarming was happening in early May. Apideas allow colonies to bring a pupating virgin queen through to the mated stage – and in a small colony of ~300 bees, the queens come into lay much quicker than in a full size colony. Usually the queens



will be introduced into a queenless colony using Butler cages or similar – and this is what we intend to do at Palmsted.

## Queen Rearing Programme

The activities in Palmsted have been focused on trying to get bees of better temperament, so a number of the committee, ably complemented by Dougal Hendry have had a first go at pro-active queen rearing. It hasn't gone quite as we planned, but we have learnt a fair bit about the process.

Step 1 is to make at least one strong colony which can act as the cellraiser, to feed queen cells massively to get the best quality queens. At the end of April, the strongest colony in the apiary made swarm preparations, so was split via an artificial swarm. May be next time we would use a Demaree method, so that the two colonies could be maintained in a single stack.

We decided to “deconstruct” the top-bar hive to make bees easier to manipulate. It proved impossible even with 4 pairs of eyes to find the queen in the TBH, so whilst we wired up the natural comb into frames, subsequently what we found was queen cells, and no eggs. The colony spent its time raising queen cells, a little depleted in number, and getting less friendly in its queenless state.

A cupkit frame was introduced into one of Debbie's angelic colonies to allow us to harvest eggs/larvae of good genetic/behavioural provenance. This bit worked well, thanks to Dougal and Debbie.

Queen cells are easiest to raise in a queenless colony, using the emergency cellraising response. Our frame of larvae from Debbie went into a colony which 3 people agreed was queenless. However, the next inspection revealed lots of brood and torn down queen cells. What had happened was that the virgin queen from the artificial swarm took ~5 weeks to come into lay, confusing us about the queenrightness of the colony.

Fortunately, Dougal had taken the spare cupkit cells to raise queens in one of his colonies, so we were able to rescue the situation by giving him some Apidea colonies to take away to be given a sealed

queen cell; these were returned to Palmsted, where several of the queens are now emerged and ready to mate.

In hindsight, we probably rushed into queen raising without enough strong colonies to make this work well – on the other hand, it's important to get practice in doing these manipulations, and we should still get a couple of queens. And there's every reason to think that a reload will work better in early June.

## Basic Beekeeping Certificate

Julian has led a number of people through a classroom (well, actually in the pub) session on the various elements of the Basic Certificate syllabus, together with a practical session at Kyriakos' apiary to get used to handling bees under test conditions. Courtesy of Janet McDonald, here are some pictures of Julian putting folks through their paces!







## MANCHESTER BEES

It might surprise some of you to know that the secretary of Canterbury Beekeepers was born and raised in Manchester. Years away at university down South, and working first in Chester then Sandwich have knocked off most of my Mancunian edges, leaving only subtle hints (I say **grass** not *grarse*, **craft** beer not *crarft* beer). There was a time when a few pints of Boddingtons would allow my accent to resurface, but I have acquired a place-less, soul-less generic accent that I would have viciously mocked as a Northern teenager. Most of the time I simply regard Manchester as the place where I grew up, rather than home.

The events at the Manchester Arena on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May and the days that followed, catapulted me right back to my teenage days. I am SO proud to call Manchester my place of origin. I'm still furious that anyone could think that a pop concert full of families is a legitimate target. Like many, I have been struggling to find a response. In the end, I've concluded that continuing to do the things that make us civilized is the only rational response. So, here's my little contribution.

If you've visited Manchester, you might have noticed that bins, bridges, and coats of arms all have a bee incorporated in them.

So why is Manchester decorated by bees? The usual explanation is that the bee was adopted as a motif for Manchester during the industrial revolution, and seven bees are included in the crest of the city's arms, which were granted to the Borough of Manchester in 1842. (Behind the bin is Manchester Town Hall, where my twin brother got married)



During the Industrial Revolution, the bee represented the hard work of Mancunians and the textile mills that were commonly described as hives of activity, with the workers inside them compared to bees. Undoubtedly the lives of a mill worker were grim, and perhaps this developed the resilience that has been so in evidence in Manchester in the last two weeks. Unfortunately, just like the residents of other cities, Mancunians have often needed on draw on this resilience. On my birthday in 1996 my friends and I saw the explosion in the [Arndale Centre](#), from where we'd been evacuated 45min earlier. The differences in outlook of the criminals is chilling.

I spent my (upper) sixth form years drinking Boddingtons in the centre of Manchester. Boddingtons is now sadly lost from the



pantheon of great beers, but many of you will remember the Cream of Manchester ("do you want a flake in that love?" TV adverts).

Sharp, gritty humour is the stock-in-trade of a night out in Manchester, so I was delighted to hear of the "beers against bellends" [fundraiser](#) on 9<sup>th</sup> June – so if you are in the Manchester area, why not pop in? And if you can't, find another way to harness the boundless energy of Manchester, whose tireless work ethic is matched by the worker bee.

We happened to be in Manchester last weekend for my sister's 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, the date of which coincided with the events at MEN Arena. Whilst we had a great time at her party, we did also pause to remember those families traumatized by one bellend on a Monday evening.

So, whether you decide to get a bee tattoo or not (I haven't, but my son's tennis practice partner from Stockport did), say no to hate, no to hiding and no to fear.



## KENT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



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### STEWARDS FOR THE KENT COUNTY SHOW, DETLING

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday 07, 08, 09 July 2017. Set up day Thursday 06 July**

I am writing to ask for volunteers for this year's Show. If you can help please complete the form attached and return it to me. If you do not want to be asked again please tick the appropriate box on the form and return it to me. (Adrian's note: all the forms can be found on the web at [this address](#))

Your attendance will be confirmed by the supply of entry tickets and duty rotas and these should reach you during the first week in July. The rota may well change between when I send it out and the Show itself, but if I have changed you to a different time I will let you know in advance. I aim to keep husbands, wives, partners and friends on the same time rota so they can enjoy their free time together. **You are expected to do ONE half day slot during the day and you will then have half a day to wander round the show.**

This year we are in the Flower marquee near the pavilion. We have use of the Pavilion for storage and light refreshments will be available in our steward's area of the marquee. These will be provided free of charge. We are unable to cook in the pavilion so lunches will not be catered for this year. The pavilion is due to be demolished and you can get further details when you come to the show. You can either buy food on site or bring your own lunches. We are grateful to Lesley Fancote and her team for the work in the past.

I would also be grateful for any help you can give in either setting up the Show on the Thursday (arrival at 10am, don't forget to bring your own lunch but drinks will be available in the Pavilion), or dismantling it on the Sunday evening (but not before 5.30pm and anyone arriving just to clear up will not get into the ground until 6pm).

Please complete the form with your preferences and I will do my best to keep to them, but I can't promise – obviously the earlier you reply the more likely you are to get the job you want. **I would appreciate it if you would remain at your post during your stewarding sessions.** If you are not happy with where you are, please come and see me. **IT IS ALSO NECESSARY THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO ACTUALLY CONVERSE WITH THE PUBLIC – DO NOT WORRY AS IN THE MAIN YOU WILL KNOW MORE THAN THEY DO.**

**I would appreciate the forms back by 20 June so that I can work out the rota**, but don't think that I won't accept your offers of help if you return your form after that date! If you know of anyone else who might be interested in stewarding, please ask them to contact me, or give me their details or send them copies of these forms.

**Any form received after the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 will mean that you will have to collect your tickets at Gate 4 having rung me on your arrival at the Show Ground**

**Bob Smith, Chief Steward**

There will be a Honey Show, which we hope many KBKA members will support by entering hive products. More information about the Show can be found [here](#).

We require honey for sale in jars, cut comb honey and bears. Do not attach tamper proof labels, as the honey has to be vetted. Also required are lip balm and other cosmetics as well as wax items. These can all be delivered on 6<sup>th</sup> July to the Bee Pavilion at the Showground.