



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

Belatedly, Happy Easter everyone! Whilst it comes as no surprise that a long bank holiday weekend was cold and rainy, what is atypical for East Kent is the long duration of cold weather in March.

Looking back through my apiary records, I have often been able to inspect 2 or 3 times in March, and I recall one year

where a committee member was called to collect a swarm on the first weekend of April! There's little chance of seeing a swarm, I think, until May, and our attention should be focused on supporting the growth in bee population through April and early May, either through moving frames around to make sure there is always food near the cluster, or by active feeding with a dilute syrup, or even pollen substitutes.

Apiary Meeting **First outdoor meeting**

Palmsted Wood
Bekesbourne

Saturday 7th April

2-4pm

Details on p2

Last year we decided to delay our first apiary meeting until the 3rd week of April, and by then we'd had several glorious weeks of sunny weather, and colonies were already substantial in size. I suspect that at our first apiary meeting this weekend, we will not find any large colonies.

In little over one month (19th May), we will be holding our first Meet the Public event of the year. This is early warning for those of you who would like to sell honey at this event that you should be thinking of bottling any stored honey in anticipation of a great selling day. It seems unlikely that anyone will have much Spring honey to harvest in the days before 19th May, but bees do act remarkably quickly, once there is a honey flow on – whether from oilseed rape, or more interesting crops like top fruit.

Adrian

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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

APRIL 2018

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

Sat April 07	Apiary meeting, Bekesbourne apiary
Fri April 13	BBKA Spring Convention Harper Adams University, Newport, TF10 8NB
Wed April 18	Julian's beginner beekeeping course (1) this course is fully booked – Barham Village Hall
Thu April 19	Julian's beginner beekeeping course (2) this course is fully booked – Barham Village Hall
April 28-29	Fast Start to Beekeeping course by Dougal Hendry, Stanford, near Folkestone. this course is fully booked
Sat May 05	Branch Spring Safari – see article below
Sat May 19	Canterbury in Bloom – meet the public event at Whitefriars
Tue May 22	Committee meeting The Old Gate Inn, 162-164 New Dover Rd, Canterbury CT1 3EL
Sat June 02	Branch apiary meeting
Sun June 10	Brogdale Strawberry Fair

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>

APIARY MEETING

Bekesbourne Lane, Bekesbourne

Saturday 7th April, 2-4pm

Please [contact the secretary](#) for exact details of where the apiary can be found

We hope that many of you can join us at Palmsted Wood this coming weekend. The wood anemones are already in flower, so it makes for a very pleasant location, particularly if the sun comes out! We need to assess the state of the hives after this unusually cool March – there are 6 hives, so although they will be quite small colonies, there should be signs of expansion.

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 make sure to have an appropriate number of suits available.





BRANCH NEWS

Mentor and Neighbourhood groups

We've had a great response from folks who would be willing to show newbees the "ropes" of practical beekeeping – thank you for offering your support. Julian and Dougal are running courses that start in April, and are still keen to hear from others who are just starting out on their beekeeping adventures, so that we can make sure they have a phone number to call when something doesn't look right (and it almost never looks right, when you are on your own!)

Some of the neighbourhood groups have started up again, but we are keen to give people as many opportunities to share war stories, advice or general chat. If you have yet indicated your interest in a local neighbourhood group, please point your browser at the following link to tell us of your interest:

<https://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/local-support/>

Bee Safari

OK. I didn't actually mean that we would visit a project in Kenya to dissuade elephants from trampling a precious field of crops. Rather I am referring to our annual Spring tour of members' apiaries.

Our meeting on Saturday 5th May will be a safari – led by experienced beekeepers of the branch's committee, we would like to visit new-(ish) beekeepers, to offer advice, reassurance or simply share a cup of tea. Please let me know if you are happy to have us visit you on that day. In past years, this has been very successful; we can usually fit in 5-7 apiaries. Last year we started in Throwley and Harbledown, then passed through Tyler Hill and Herne Bay, looped back to Fordwich and Upstreet, before dashing over to Finglesham and Church Hougham.. Members whose apiaries we are not visiting are welcome to join us at conveniently close locations.

We'd hope that each of the neighbourhood groups is represented during the tour, as it's a good way to re-start the seasonal support groups.

Email the [secretary](#), as soon as possible, if you would like to put your name down for a visit. I will also send out a separate email to remind everyone. I will circulate the final details by email

on or about the 2nd May, so please reply before then if you want to be a stop on the safari.

Swarm Management

This is the last time I will mention it, even though it seems like hive-swarving is still months away. If you'd like to help out your local community by collecting swarms in unwanted places, please sign up on our website.

<https://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/swarm-management/>

Website Changes

The more eagle-eyed of you may have noticed that there have been a few technical changes on our website. Most obviously, the webpages all now begin https:, which means there is more security when you enter information into forms etc – the data will be transferred in an "encrypted" fashion, making it less easy for your personal information to be intercepted. Depending on which web-browser program you use (Internet Explorer, Chrome, Safari etc), you should get a padlock and a "secure site" message in the address panel too.

I've also put some effort into preparing for the imminent arrival of the "General Data Protection Regulations" (GDPR) in May 2018. Whenever we ask you to provide information, we will ask your permission to store that information, and tell you how we intend to use it. You are probably getting lots of messages from other organisations asking you to re-register your details, and that will only increase in the coming weeks. I even saw a GDPR-related advert on the hoardings of a Premiership football match recently!

For Canterbury Beekeepers, we will only use your information to help us manage the branch, and keep you informed about what's going on. We will not pass on information to third parties – remember that we are a part of Kent Beekeepers Association and the BBKA, so it's part of joining the branch that your name/address etc information should be shared with KBKA/BBKA. As we are in a transition year, we'll err on the side of caution in seeking your permission, as we await guidance from the BBKA as to how far we should take things.

BEES IN A TREE



Early in March, after a couple of windy days a lady called the Canterbury Beekeepers, worried that the tree in her front yard was going to blow over. Her reason for calling a bee club was that she knew the tree contained a colony and her tree surgeon was understandably reluctant to cut it down.

When David went and checked it out he found a big tree, close to the house and the road which was clearly rotten in the middle and was pleased to see a honeybee flying from a hole. The tree surgeon had removed the branches to make it safe so David told her that he would pass the details on to a club member in need of bees who would come with the equipment to deal with it.'..

In a classic case of delegation, David persuaded a novice beekeeper (Andy King) and Jan Soetaert to toddle along with tree felling equipment, beekeeping suits, and a Physics PhD colleague, to do the hard work. The picture to the left is taken from the video of the tree felling (which you can see if you click on the picture); no bees (or Physicists) were hurt, and a bees' nest was successfully relocated to more appropriate surroundings.

Andy King asked the question: How many PhDs does it take to fell a bee-tree in South Canterbury? Answer: Three. Notice that formal education is clearly of no value whatsoever in bee husbandry as he makes the suggestion to use some foam as a damper, which is missed as the tree falls. They managed to

isolate the nest in a section of the trunk and then transport it to its new location, placing it in the same orientation as before.

Jan reported that the tree diameter was about 45cm. The bees were not too excitable, only a couple came out when the trunk fell. They quickly bunged up the the holes with rags. They don't think the nest was bigger than a basket ball and the cluster probably an oversized apidea. We'll see more when Jan and Andy open it up in a couple of weeks...

BEES AT WATERSTONES

If you notice a bee-themed window at Waterstones over the next few weeks, David Cockburn has been advising them on the content they might choose, has lent them a skep hive; in return, we should get a bit of publicity.

