



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS

A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITOR'S NOTES

The excellent summer has led to some large wasp nests, and now that those nests are in decline, the wasps can be a real nuisance in the apiary. Small entrances, carefully managed feeding and judicious use of traps are all useful to prevent robbing out.

Lest we all get too negative about wasps, it's worth checking out the [Big Wasp survey](#), as it seeks to learn more about the prevalence of various species of social wasps across the country. It's too late to join in the monitoring project, but they have lots of fun facts – in the UK wasps may consume as much as 14,000 tonnes (!) of greenfly, caterpillars and other insects that annoy gardeners.

BBKA are currently recruiting for beekeepers to help out with another citizen science project - the PoshBEE research programme. You can read more about it on p5, but the research team is hoping to find beekeepers in Kent to supply beehives next Spring.

Experienced beekeepers always refer to August as

the beginning of the beekeeping year. A well-provisioned hive, with low disease and virus loads can survive harsh winters – so helping the bees with supplementary feeding now will increase winter survival. If your varroa counts are

high, then you may need to consider chemical treatment, or natural selection, as it's too late for biotechnical or husbandry controls.

Hopefully you have had a good summer with some surplus honey – the East Kent Ploughing Match, the Brogdale Apple Festival and the Dover Honey Show are all good

autumnal events to sell or show off your products. Look out for invitations to support these activities later in September and October.

We'd heard of a good apiary spot becoming available in Sturry, so if anyone is looking for a spot close to a fishery, please contact the [committee](#).

We are expecting some changes to the line-up of the branch's committee at the next AGM, so if you want to get more involved in the running of the branch, and have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of the existing committee.

Adrian

Apiary Meeting

**Hosted by
Debbie
Burton**

Stanford

**Saturday 1st
September**

2-4pm

Details on p2

CBKA Officers

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Michael Roberts
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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

SEPTEMBER 2018

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

Sat September 01	Apiary meeting (Debbie Burton, Stanford)
Sun September 23	Apply for BBKA module examinations.
Wed September 26	East Kent Ploughing Match, Malmains Farm, Waldershare, Dover CT15 5BG, UK
Sat September 29	from 1.15pm at Lenham Community Centre, 4 Church Square, Lenham, Maidstone ME17 2PJ. Flier Final 2018 "Experiments in Skep Beekeeping" with Chris Park "The Asian Hornet Incursion - Torbay Beekeepers' response to the threat" with Gerald Stuart
Wed October 07	branch indoor meeting, Barham Village Hall, Valley Rd, Barham, CT4 6NX
October 13-14	Brogdale Apple Festival
Sat October 20	DDBKA Honey Show at Shepherdswell Village Hall, 2:30 pm.
October 25-27	National Honey Show, Sandown Park Racecourse, Portsmouth Rd, Esher KT10 9AJ, UK
Wed November 07	branch AGM, Whitefriars Management Suite, Canterbury CT1 2TF, UK
Sat November 10	BBKA modules examination day https://www.bbka.org.uk/modules
Sat November 24	BBKA microscopy examinations
Sat December 08	Christmas party

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

At Debbie Burton's apiary

Saturday 1st September, 2-4pm

Waverley. Stanford North TN25 6DL

Debbie offers the following instructions for those not using SatNav devices. Leave the main B2086 for Stanford North (from Canterbury direction take right turn before J11 of M20). Go past The Drum pub on right and take second turn left into small lane, up past church and Waverley is at end, slightly left. Park on lawn along left hedge if needed.

We plan to see how Debbie's bees are preparing for the winter; making sure they have stores a-plenty, and consider any late manipulations or treatments. We are also intending to do some extraction from honey boxes sourced from our apiary in Bekesbourne. Depending on numbers who attend, we might do this in one or two groups, so please do let Adrian know (by [email](#) or text on 07816 975286) if you plan to join us (no need to confirm non-attendance).

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 Adrian know beforehand.

If you want to participate in honey extraction, clean clothes are required; kitchen coveralls are advised, as you will get sticky!





BRANCH NEWS

Meet the Public Events

We had another very successful Bee Day in Whitefriars on Saturday 24th August. As usual, these events work best when we have plenty of volunteers to help. Thanks to the following for contributing time, honey or both: Norman Adams, Janet McDonald, David Wells, Julian and Anne McIlroy, Martin Neame, Magdalene Chau, Simon Daniels and Emma Powell, Maggie McKenzie and Julian Audsley. Even though it was pretty chilly in the morning, the afternoon was much better. We haven't got the figures from our accountants yet (!) but I understand honey sales were good and it seems a lot of people wanted to sign up for the next beekeeping course: so we may see some new faces at our winter meetings.



Hope to see you soon at the East Kent Ploughing Match or Brogdale Apple Festival for more "Meet the Public" fun.

Magdalene was head photographer for the day, and here are some pictures from her album:, as well as a short narrative from Magdalene in this, her first year of selling honey, which she's attached to her honey jars.



A message from the Beekeeper

Mei Mei Harbledown Honey

I saw a swarm of bees by my back door in 2012, our Queen's Diamond Jubilee Year that inspired me to keep bees. With the encouragement of two beloved neighbours Louise and Richard I set up my hive. With extra help from David G in Canterbury Beekeepers Association (CBKA) and my neighbour Katherine my first colony of bees was installed on 18.4.14.

It took me four years hanging out with my bees and with the loving kindness of the CBKA members I have my first official honey harvest this year in July 2018.

Keeping bees is all about getting in tune with nature, everything has a place and its own pace. One single bee cannot do much, however a colony working as a community can do wonders. The Queen bee has only one job, to lay eggs, worker bees do the nursing,

housekeeping, foraging, producing, defending, monitoring the hive condition, conserving energy, expanding, staying or leaving.

The way of life in bees can be a metaphor in our daily life. The CBKA is a wonderful community supporting me all the time. The elders have immense knowledge to guide me to solve issues at hand. Beekeeping is about practising my power of observation, knowing everything happens in precision with nature, patience and my own determination slowly come into play. I even had an experience of being angry in bee keeping. Being stung by bees may be painful but the flip side of accepting that it was a natural acupuncturist in action supporting my wellbeing is equally satisfying.

Bees go out foraging to bring pollen and nectar back to the hive and turn their finds into pots of honey and food for winter. Humans go out daily and come home. We often get together in a group to exchange experiences, knowingly or not knowingly, paid or unpaid, all for satisfaction in life. For me I get a chance to share my passion in life, Keys to Body Wisdom, supporting our body so we can continue beekeeping into our elder years.

KENT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



Kent Beekeepers Autumn Lecture

Saturday 29th September 2018 from 1.15pm

Lenham Community Centre

4 Church Square, Lenham, Maidstone ME17 2PJ

'Experiments in Skep Beekeeping'

Chris Park

Chris keeps bees on organic farmland around the Oxon/Wilts border. He has researched and experimented with skep beekeeping amongst other ancient beekeeping techniques, discovering many benefits and advantages for the bees. This fascinating and entertaining lecture will be coloured by an array of skeps, artefacts, publications and demonstrations of some skep making techniques and related crafts'



The Asian Hornet Incursion - Torbay Beekeepers' response to the threat'

Gerald Stuart

One of the Directors of the B4 project, which works in partnership with Paignton Zoo, Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust and Plymouth University. Our project also currently works with 'Lost Gardens of Heligan', 'The Eden Project', 'Paradise Park in Hayle', Mount Edgcumbe, and the 'Duchy of Cornwall

The B4 project is a Community Interest Company representing a group of beekeepers whose aim is to protect the UK's native honey bee *Apis mellifera mellifera*. Our project is committed and currently working to 'Genetically Map' and store DNA at Plymouth University from Bees from selected Apiaries throughout the UK

Tickets £7 on the door

Or £5 in advance

Payment to Kent Beekeepers Association
CAF Bank

Sort Code 40 52 40

Acc No. 00013963 please use your sur-
name as your reference





Positive Thinking

August, 2018



Mission Statement:

- To further and promote the craft of beekeeping
- To advance the education of the public in the importance of bees in the environment.

The unified voice of British Beekeeping

Welcome

I mentioned last month the Executive Committee - the majority of the trustees attend the Finance committee meetings each month, but another important committee is Governance, this year it is particularly busy because of the change from a Charity to a CIO. We also needed to improve some of the aspects of the constitution to make sure that the BBKA is managed and operated to the best practices. Stephen Barnes heads this committee and he has been diligent in making sure that the new CIO will be fit for purpose, the constitution has now been distributed for general appraisal and it is important that any comments are made as soon as possible because once the Solicitors finish drafting the constitution, there will be no more changes allowed.

I would liken the Constitution to a set of rules that must not be broken, it is to make sure that all Trustees know what can and cannot be done in the name of the BBKA. In a business they would be Policies and Procedures, written in line with British Standards suitable to the business, I have written many of these and it is certainly not an easy task as every small thing must be accounted for and explained. Of all our Trustees, I do believe that Stephen is the best one to take this challenge on and complete it to give the BBKA a great future.

-Margaret Wilson, Chair of the BBKA

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Our Website
02476 698620

Forum

There's a new web based forum for the BBKA
- <https://bbkaforum.co.uk/>
It was agreed at a communications meeting that a new forum would be

POSHBEE Project



BBKA are very fortunate in being part of a brand new, exciting project, involving many European countries and funded by the EU. The project, named PoshBee, is designed to determine the exposure of bees to a range of chemicals and assess the levels of pests and diseases and nutritional status, and the impacts these may have on the health of honey bees, bumble bees and solitary bees in a field realistic way rather than in laboratory studies. Prof. Simon Potts (Reading University) and Prof. Mark Brown (Royal Holloway College) have been the guiding lights in getting this application drawn up and finally approved.

This is going to be a wonderful opportunity for some of our members to take part in real scientific experiments and initially we are looking for volunteers in two areas - Kent and in Berkshire/Oxfordshire who would be interested in providing hives for use next year. The beekeepers would be paid for the use of their hives (price to be decided) which will be placed in orchards in Kent and in OSR fields in the Berkshire/Oxfordshire area in Spring 2019. The sites will be chosen by Prof. Potts in collaboration with various farmers to represent differing levels of pesticide usage, among other factors.

The hives will remain at the sites for about a month after flowering has finished and the beekeepers will be expected to look after their hives. They will have their travelling expenses reimbursed and will be able to take a crop of honey.

The aim is to take various samples from colonies throughout the season and these will be assayed by various experts in laboratories. The beekeepers will not be expected to take these samples. Those willing to take part will be expected have colonies ready for moving in the spring of 2019. We require 24 colonies for each of the two areas, so ideally 30 colonies to allow for losses over the winter. Please contact Pam Hunter now to register your interest in taking part pam.hunter@bbka.org.uk. For those interested and willing to take part, Prof. Potts will give a presentation at Stoneleigh of what is required later this year.

created and trialled. One of the BBKA members, Chris Mountain, jumped at the chance to help and has created the forum for everyone to use. It's up and running and we hope that everyone will sign up and start using it!

Bloom & Wild

We mentioned this last month and Claire Hartry has been chasing this since that time, but they are concerned that to launch something like this with Christmas planning already underway would be a distraction, so Claire has been asked to diary this for January next year.

Jersey Asian Hornets

We have had news from our Jersey Branch that they are having extreme difficulties with the Asian Hornet over there. They spent last year searching for the hornet's nests and thought that they had been successful in finding them all, however this year proved that to be incorrect. From the Information that Diane Roberts has received, the hornets seem to be everywhere, in greenhouses, in the hedges, gardens. There has been a call for volunteers to go and help to find the nests, some volunteers have already gone to Jersey and they are staying with Beekeepers over there because with the holiday season, accommodation is very scarce, also as they are with other beekeepers they will be better able to help in the search for the hornets.

If anyone is able to help over there please e mail diane.roberts@bbka.org.uk

She will be able to pass your details on to the Jersey Beekeepers to arrange accommodation etc.

President's Project

Margaret Murdin alongside George Brown, our fundraiser, are championing this venture. It will not happen overnight as with any changes to a building or grounds, we have to have plans drawn up, quotations obtained for the changes to the building but we also have a lot of details needed for the apiary. We would like a raised bed sensory area so that people who may be wheelchair users are able to enjoy the scented flowers.

We have to organise where each flowerbed will go, the type of flowers, perennials or annuals, bushes or trees, and all must be bee friendly of course. We have to have forage all year round to help the bees as there is very little at Stoneleigh at the moment. We have planted some trees for the bees but we need to go further and make sure there is everything for each month. If you have any plants which your own bees love, please e mail the name to me and we can get the into the new garden design.

Margaret.wilson@bbka.org.uk

Budgets

Howard Pool and Lyn Barker are responsible for collating everyone's budgets for the coming year and then trying to calculate the income from all our sources, be it capitation, gift aid, the [Web Shop](#), Adopt a Beehive, Corporate Donations, bequests or

grants. It is like putting your finger in the air to test the wind direction, but nevertheless they do manage to balance the budgets, we have meetings to ensure that we know what each committee has to achieve and away we go. Over the past two years, we have managed to not only match the budgets but to make savings as well which has been great. This year 2018, we may not be so lucky as we have already made saving in all available areas so there is little left for us to save on, plus the usual general expenses are increasing for the BBKA as they are in all businesses. We are now waiting for the last couple of months before year end, holding our breath and hoping that we can manage one more time to beat our own budget. We will not know until October so it is a tense time for everyone on the Executive Committee.

September, 2018

Positive Thinking



Mission Statement:

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The unified voice of British Beekeeping

Welcome

This edition is slightly early to account for the seriousness of the situation in Jersey.

Jersey are still suffering from the hornets, volunteers from the southern counties have travelled over to offer assistance, if you feel that you can help, please get in touch with Diane Roberts at diane.Roberts@bbka.org.uk and she will pass on your information to the organisers in Jersey.

-Margaret Wilson, Chair of the BBKA

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Asian Hornets in Jersey

This is from Judith Norman who volunteered to help in Jersey.

Earlier this month Diane Roberts sent an email suggesting that beekeepers go to help out in Jersey because the Asian hornets were multiplying at such a rate that local beekeepers were swamped with the workload. At first I felt awfully noble, dashing to their rescue, but I have a confession to make: it turned out to be the most fun I have had in ages. I got thoroughly hooked on the thrill of the chase, as well as the camaraderie of working alongside like-minded people who enjoyed using their wits to overcome every type of obstacle one could imagine. Locating the nests was our only task; as soon as a nest was discovered, the local pest controllers were notified, and we dashed off to work in the next location where hornets had been spotted.

A helpful step forward was viewing the brief footage of Bob Hogge, who developed the technique, demonstrating how he marks hornets, notes carefully the direction of flight, as far as he can see, and then times their return. From that, he works out roughly how far away the nest is, and then moves his bait along in that direction to get a bit closer, until he finds that the return times are under two minutes. He places a further bait station beyond where he thinks the nest could be, and confirms that he now sees them flying back in the opposite direction.

MARKING HORNETS

I was worried about the bravado of not wearing a bee suit when I first saw the video. In practice, I didn't wear mine at all during the week. Even though the bait attracted wasps by the hundred, neither they nor the hornets are the least bit interested in being pesky while they are supping on the tasty bait. We used queen catchers (the kind with the sponge plunger) to catch the hornets and mark them with the same markers we use for queens. We had some stop watches, and otherwise used the stop watch function on our mobile phones, to time the returns.

I will give a suggested list of things to carry for setting up and monitoring the bait stations later.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCES

Bob Hogge, one of the two most active hornet tracking beekeepers, was on holiday, but invited me to stay with him from Monday. Flights from Exeter were being snapped up under my nose while I searched on line, so I stuck out my neck and booked for the following day with a hotel stay for the first two nights.

Our Website

02476 698620

Honey Survey

Please complete your BBKA Honey Survey for 2018 here -

<https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=153557070585>

-All participants will be entered into a prize draw to win one of either: three pairs of tickets for the BBKA Spring Convention 2019 (each pair worth £70); three bouquets of fresh flowers from Bloom and Wild, each worth £25, or three Burts Bees gift sets each worth £15.99.

Posh Bee

Calling all Beekeepers in Oxfordshire, Kent and Berkshire!

Please contact
pam.hunter@bbka.org.uk to express your interest now.

Master Beekeepers 2018

This year members have done extremely well with achieving the qualifications for Master Beekeeper, this is what the BBKA is all about, passing on knowledge and teaching all things beekeeping. I hope you join me in congratulating all those who made it through to Master Beekeeper this year.

They are:

Bob was extraordinarily hospitable. He is a wonderful lateral thinker, and keen on education, and put huge effort into making sure that I (and the other three volunteers who were under his wing) understood as much as possible about hornet habits. He was such an excellent host, even providing home cooked meals.....lobster, no less, and a perfect soufflé, for example, that at times I worried that he should have been spending more time actively nest hunting. He seemed to be able to juggle an amazing number of balls at once and within a couple of days we felt as though we were becoming "experts", with good marking skills and passable bait station management. Bob lent us his second car and we got to know the island as we travelled between parishes, helping teams on the ground who needed more bait stations than they could monitor for themselves. We sometimes found the nests ourselves, and in the excitement may have made the mistake briefly of thinking we were getting quite clever, but soon remembered that every time we arrived, local teams had been slogging away patiently moving their bait stations closer and closer, perhaps for days, so if we found a nest, it was largely due to their having laid the foundation. If they felt miffed that we had wandered in towards the end and cherry picked, they graciously didn't show it, but made a big fuss with back slapping and posing for photos and generally celebrating.

HORNET FLIGHT PATHS

Individual hornets visiting a bait station will have fairly consistent flight paths. These probably won't be in straight lines, though. In an open area, they may well fly along a hedge line, and in town they may follow open streets! Some may fly straight through a line of trees but others may go all the way around the line of trees. It is easy to see one fly if it has open sky as a background, but as soon as it passes in front of a tree, for instance, it is no longer visible. Having several people with radios cuts down enormously on the time and leg work. If the person at the bait gives a shout as the insect takes off, the others further down may just manage to get a glimpse of it as it rounds a corner, and one can then decide where to place the next bait station, in the bid to get closer to the nest.

MAPS AND ACCESS

John de Carteret, a retired forensic photographer, is the other of the two most active hornet tracking beekeepers. He has been working tirelessly for long hours answering calls about sightings in the various areas, and travelling out to confirm them. His forte is the documentation of the undertaking, which he does mainly by film and still photography. He also produces impressive A3 maps showing small areas in a large

Caroline Sarah Beardsmore,
Geoffrey Derek Blay,
Debora Campbell,
Michael John Cullen,
Valerie Hawley,
John Hewitt,
Paul Jenkins,
Ian Jobson,
Philip Khorassandjian,
Bridget Knutson,
Simon Christopher Maslin,
Patricia Ann Morgan,
Paul Noblet,
Adam Parker,
Paul Brendon Roberts,
Stuart Roberts,
Rhona Toft,
Richard Malcolm Watson,
Alan Woolthead.

Very well done, you should all be extremely proud of this achievement.

BBKA News Special Edition - Feeding Honey Bees



scale, which he prints from Google Pro, so one can see individual trees and gates etc. Getting hold of one of John's maps transforms one's task. It makes it easier to plan and deploy team members, and to record flight directions so that one doesn't get muddled with so much information coming in. Even for local beekeepers who know the area well, John's maps are highly prized and make the work much easier and speed progress.

We did a fair amount of climbing over gates and wandering through woods, but tried very diligently to gain permission from property owners first. On the whole people were aware of the importance of tracking hornets, having heard about it on the news. We received warm welcomes from all types of people, and on my first day I was amused that we trudged off from one garden in a council estate carrying some mackerel and three giant cucumbers, which we had been given as a reward for our endeavours. We had offers of tea frequently, and had our water bottles filled every couple of hours. I was invited into some palatial homes and gardens, and equally welcomed to the top floor of a humble cottage, in order to be able to see into a tall tree to check for visible insect activity. Nests are very difficult to spot, and it helps to keep a look out for insect traffic in the tree tops, as an indication of a possible nest.

RADIO TRACKING

Two academics from University of Exeter brought their radio tracking equipment, and when we were able to catch big enough hornets, they chilled them to subdue them, and glued on a tiny transmitter under the thorax. They followed the transmitter when they released the hornet, and hoped to locate the nest when the marked hornet arrived. After a few days they were very successful, but for the first few days we felt great satisfaction at finding nests before they did!

The radio tracking certainly has a role, but my impression so far is that they are fairly dependent on our having done the spade work beforehand, to narrow down the area for them. If they start tracking too far from the nest, there can be too much ground for them to cover at speed. The hornets fly very fast even with the transmitters attached, and a person clutching what looks like a big TV aerial that needs to be pointed at a fast moving insect some way off, can only run so fast, and may be hampered by hedges, busy roads, warehouses, and rivers, for example. Once the transmitter has been attached, they may have only the one chance to follow it, because that hornet may get stuck in the nest, and will not necessarily return to the bait to give them another chance. Each transmitter is a very costly item, and finding another hornet and attaching it may take hours, and the bills soon mount

up if several transmitters need to be used in the course of locating one nest.

I will list in another instalment what one needs to carry, to set up and monitor bait stations, and also what I think a central coordinator could do to help the teams.

Whilst I had set out to play a role in combatting hornets in Jersey, and I hope I did contribute significantly, I gained far more. I had no concept of the intricacies of successful nest tracking beforehand and was very grateful for the willingness of all team members to spend time sharing their knowledge patiently and explaining carefully to make sure I was going to be able to work effectively.

-Judith Norman.

Special Editions

We now have a collection of Special Editions, books on specific subjects to help us with our beekeeping. We take these books to venues and to meeting at Apiary's but I am sure that there are many of you who have neither heard nor seen one of these books.

They are A4 and have information on a specific subject.

This month I will introduce '[Feeding Honey Bees](#)' a must at this time of year. The book costs £4.00 and is available from the [BBKA online Shop](#), but you can also ask your link trustee to get a copy for you and save on postage. The authors who write these books do not ask for a fee, they just want to pass on their own experiences to help others, Bridget Beattie who is a Master Beekeeper and has achieved the NDB. Has written this book. She is very knowledgeable and a popular speaker, the content of this book including the photographs is a must on anyone's book shelf.

As well as the books, we have laminated A4 cards which are great to take to the apiary to guide you through tasks, on return they are wipe clean ready for next time they are needed. They have instructions on one side and diagrams explaining what is needed on the other side. They are a great asset at any apiary, especially at training apiaries, the task can be explained then handed to the beekeeper making sure that the task is completed perfectly.

At the moment, we have these for the Pagden, Shook Swarm and a Bailey Comb Change. They are great, it means when you decide you need to any of these actions that all the equipment you need is identified so you have everything to hand for the task.

These laminated sheets are £1 each and in my opinion well worth every penny.

