



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITORS MESSAGE

Little did I know after stating in last month's editorial that the weather had at last turned for the better, when just around the corner was torrential rain, thunderstorms and howling gales, interspersed with a few hours of heat stroke.

If it's confusing for us, imagine how the bees are feeling?

Despite all of this, most bees have been able to find some forage and it's been wonderful to see the bees out and about in the last few weeks, and to see their stores increasing, even though this year may not produce the honey yields we are used to.

With August just around the corner it's a shock to realise that we now need to start winter preparations. (Feeling somewhat cheated at this point as I don't feel that we've had a summer yet!) Questions start popping in my head..... Will there be enough honey for me to extract in August for our use as well as leaving the 40lbs (ish) for the bees who have worked so hard to save these stores for their winter food? What Varroa treatment should I be looking at, to make sure the bees can build up for the winter? Mite levels peak in the colony from late September to October, so

it's considered good practise to treat in late August to strive for healthy strong winter bees, and the survival of the colony to next spring.

For August the NBU has information on how to manage Varroa as an integrated pest management approach. You may find it helpful to take a look at the BeeBase web pages on the NBU website <https://www.nationallbeeunit.com>

It's also nearly that time when the wasps make their presence felt, so entrance block reductions at the ready... if you see them at the hives...it's already too late! And remember, if you use wasp traps, keep them away from your hives to lure them away from your bees and not to your bees.

Finally.... Congratulations to our own **Dr Andy King** for his letter in BeeCraft this month. "Tanging Success" - how he lured a swarm with only a colander and a saucepan. You have to read it to believe it, not one to be missed! Our own pied piper has also written an article for us this month, on his experiences with Queen rearing for the club.

Lisa

P.S. Apologies to all who were joining us at our home Apiary. George is now on the mend, many thanks for your good wishes.

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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.

JULY 2021

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

newsletter@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk

2021 YEAR PROGRAMME

August 2021 – (DATE to be CONFIRMED!) Apiary meeting - An inspection, led by a demonstrator, giving you a chance to review the colonies' progress and compare with your own (very useful for beginners.) If you wish to join this event, please reply to the email invite going out soon. Remember, clean suits, boots & gloves are the rule, glasses if you wear them, as eggs are really very small!

August 28th & 29th – Brogdale Cider Festival. We have been offered a stall at this event to sell our honey.

September 29th - East Kent Ploughing Match at Eastry Court Farm. We will share a bee stall with Dover & Thanet BKAs. There is however, no competition for honey exhibits this year.

October 21st to 23rd – A return of the National Honey show at Sandown Park www.honeyshow.co.uk

November 2021 – return to indoor meetings

EXTRACTORS – REMINDER – HOW TO BORROW

The club has two extractors available to members and friends who do not have their own extraction equipment. If you would like to borrow one of these extractors from the club, please contact Magdelene Mei Halkes on magdelene.chau@gmail.com or 07587203808.

The hire charge is £5 direct to the clubs bank account and Magdelene Mei will provide these details.

Both extractors are manual ones, with one able to take 14 x 12 frames.

How the hire process works:

- Contact Magdelene Mei for club payment details.
- Magdelene Mei will provide the contact and location details of the last person to hire the extractor.
- You then arrange collection arrangements with this last person.
- At the end of the season, the last member using the extractor stores it over winter if they have space available.

(Please remember to wash them out thoroughly with cold water before passing on to the next user.)



(Image for illustration purposes only)



BRANCH NEWS

Andy King – Queen Raising at Palmsted: Lessons Learnt in the First Two Rounds

This article is an update on our queen raising experiments at Palmsted using mini-mating nucs. Our grand vision was to raise 24 queens for re-queening at Palmsted, for over-wintering Polynucs headed by new queens, and then pass the remainder onto club members. We fell well-short of this ambitious target, which we now know is entirely unrealistic given the number of apideas, the success rate of mating, and the number of rounds that we fit into a season. But we have had some limited success and we now understand how to improve things for other rounds of queen raising.

Conventionally queen cells are raised in super strong, queenless cell-builder, and then eggs or young larvae are added from the doner colony with good genetics. The queen cells are then drawn down and, when they are ripe, placed in the apideas with a cupful of bees. The apideas are closed up for 3 days, and then opened when the bees have fully bonded into a new colony.



Andy inspects the Apidea box

Constructing a cell-builder is itself a skill, the danger being that not all queen cells are culled in an enormous colony that is artificially over-populated with bees. Of course, you can shake off all the bees to check the frames, which means there are huge number of bees in the air, making

it a rather intense beekeeping experience. All the cell-builder actually does is increase the density of bees, so we experimented in simulating this with a very shallow super that we built to specially house 33 apidea frames, henceforth called the apidea box.

The foundation on the frames are drawn down in the doner colony, then the queen lays into the apidea box, which is placed directly on top of the brood box. When a good number of frames contain eggs and young larvae, the queen is smoked into the underlying brood box, and the brood box is removed. The supers are kept on since they contain nurse bees, and as the field bees return, they cram into now queen-less, very shallow apidea box containing the apidea frames, artificially increasing the bee density. The nurse bees from the supers provide the royal jelly, and the bee density yields a good crop of nicely sculptured queen cells. This worked a treat, with the exception that the apidea box that we build was 6mm too deep (allowing for bottom bee space) and some queen cells protruded into this space, which mean they were damaged when these frames were inserted into the apideas.

The apidea box saves the drama of setting cell builder and the fuff of using the Nicot system. After harvesting the apidea frames, new apidea frames were added to the apidea box which was united, with the supers, back with and the brood box. Then the queen lays into the apidea super and the process is repeated for a further round of queen raising. The crucial point is that few bees are removed from the doner colony so that it can still go on to make honey (which is indeed what is happening).

The apideas were set up with a frame of brood with a nice queen cell, a frame of stores and a frame of sealed brood to boost the colony. The bees clung to the frames as they were placed in the apideas, so it was not necessary to use the water spray and bucket method to add a cupful of bees to each apidea (avoiding the associated bee carnage). We found out that the apideas were best set up with in two person gang: one person gently leveraging the frames from the apidea box, saying it was it was, another placing it into an appropriate apidea. Doing this by oneself is actually cognitively difficult as one loses track of what apidea contains what type of frame already as one switches back and forth from the

peering into the apideas to poking around in the apidea box.



Guess which one mated successfully!

We relocated all the apideas to a back garden so that monitoring of the apideas was easier than at Palmsted where access is limited. The apideas were painted different colours and placed on a shelf that was mounted high on a shed. This, in fact, was a mistake as we will explain shortly. The apideas were closed up for 3 days, allowing the colony to bond into a new unit, and then the doors were opened and we waited for bees to start collecting pollen. In both the first and second rounds, however, only 1/3 of the apideas yielded a successfully mated queen and, bizarrely, 1/3 of the apideas were completely empty of bees with the exception of a frame that contained a closed queen cell and a dead queen. Lifting off the cap of the queen cell revealed a perfectly formed mature queen, which presumably died because it was chilled just before emergence. What a shame.



Queen cell examination

We hypothesise that the development of adjacent apidea was ahead by a day or two and all the bees were then sucked out of the apidea, attracted by pheromone of the queen from the adjacent apidea. (You may have witnessed a train of bees marching from a queenless colony into a queenright one along a shared hive stand when the colonies are too close to one another.) Apideas are conventionally set up so that they are back-to-back, but mounting against the side of a shed precluded this. This is more important than we realised.

To conclude, like many things in beekeeping, success was mixed but importantly lessons have been learnt to improve the success rate of subsequent queen raising rounds. To summarise the apidea box worked a treat but the overall success rate was compromised by the way we orientated the apideas on a single shelf.

Andy King, July 5th, 2021

ZAMBIA - Monze Women's Beekeeping Project

Partnership Manager: Dr Stuart Andrews

This month we have a fascinating report from Stuart on how beekeeping supports women who have sole responsibility for the wellbeing of their households. Please see the full report here.

<https://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/P17-12-SA-Monze-Womens-Beekeeping-Project-final.pdf>

Beekeepers Health July 2021

More activities are coming back into our life this month. You may think you have less idling time than last month.

Let's be short and sweet, to put 20 seconds as often as you can back to your physical self. This month, the key is simple. Lift both shoulders up for as high as possible and simply hold for 20 seconds, or in a count of 20. Release slowly. Of course, if you have time, or your body likes this move, you can hold it for longer. Just notice what kind of sensations you can pick up. Stay curious!

Magdalene Mei Halkes, Ministry of Body Wisdom

Lemon and Thyme Loaf Recipe – A summer recipe from Janet McDonald

Ingredients:

- 190 g unsalted butter
- 190 g plain flour
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 3 tsp finely chopped thyme
- 190 g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 0.25 tsp salt\
- 25 ml soured cream

Soaking syrup:

- 40 g caster sugar
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tsp thyme

Method:

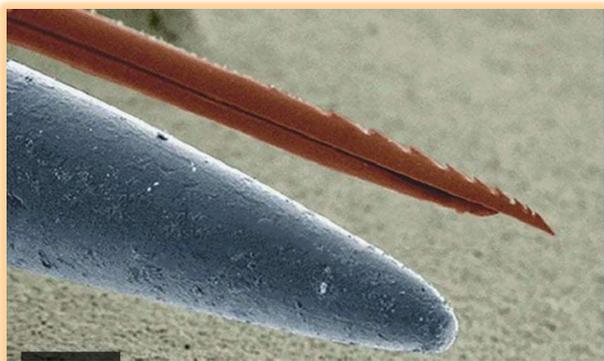
- Preheat oven to 170
- Beat together butter, lemon zest, thyme leaves and sugar.
- Gradually mix in eggs
- Sift in flour, baking powder and salt
- Add soured cream
- Put in a greased loaf tin and bake for about 40 - 50 mins
- Make syrup by bringing slowly to boil then simmering until it halves in volume.
- Pour over cake as soon as it comes out oven (I prick cake with a skewer to allow syrup to soak fully in)

Enjoy eating!

Bee 'Stuff'

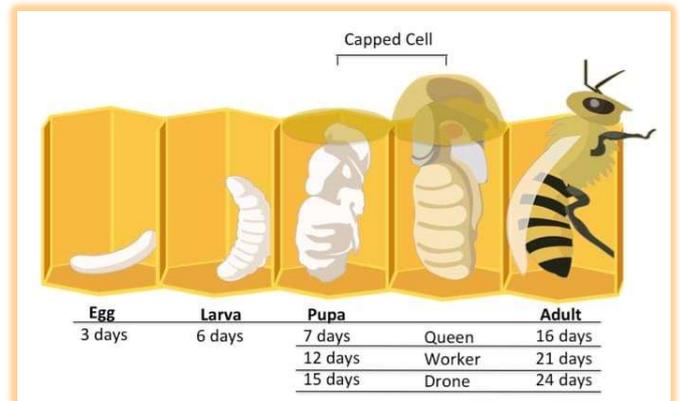
A Sting compared to a needle!

Now you know why its so easy for a bee sting to hit its mark.... ouch!



Brood development

If you need help recalling the stages of a bees development, here's a handy visual image!



Lisa Jenkins - Product review

My favourite choice this month.

Smoker Box.



One of my funniest stories this month came from a lovely couple who have an out apiary. At the end of each inspection visit, on the drive home, one of them would have their arm hanging out of the car window, holding on to the smoker as they don't like the smell and fumes in the car. (I'm sure you can visualise this image!)

Their solution, a 'smoker box'. The hot smoker can be safely placed in the solid sealed metal box, keeping all the smells and heat safely contained for the drive home. It's sturdy and effective and comes in a rather fetching yellow.

It was also a practical and somewhat romantic birthday gift which the recipient was thrilled with!

So if you're wondering what to ask for, for Christmas...

News from around the world

The terrible floods in Germany this month saw some devastating images of the effects on hives located in the flooded areas. Our hearts go out to our European neighbours.



Information from our branch secretary - Jan Soetaert

BBKA Training Programme Summer 2021

The BBKA is pleased to confirm that the following training courses at Stoneleigh will be available summer 2021. Please share this information with your members.

General Husbandry: 8th August 14th & 15th August (3 day course)

Please go to the BBKA webshop for more details and to book a place:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/pages/shop/department/training-courses>

If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Snelson: sarah.snelson@bbka.org.uk

Kind regards

Anne Rowberry, Chair

And finally don't forget...

BBKA Calendar

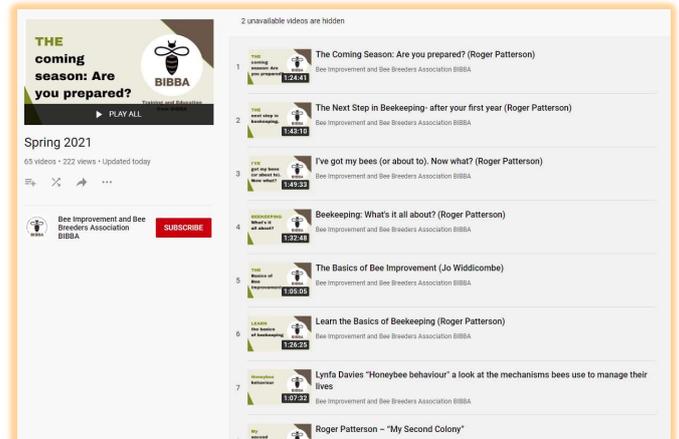
The BBKA calendar where branches can add their own events and view forthcoming lectures and much more.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/calendar-listing-page>

Plus the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association BIBBA

<https://bibba.com/>

Whilst the spring season of BIBBA videos have finished, there are a wealth of video's still available!



All 66 videos are available to watch on the BIBBA Spring 2021 YouTube Playlist

And for all your freewheeling bees out there...

