



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITORS MESSAGE

October has arrived and with it the start of the damp chilly mornings and colder nights. Which means no more intensive hive inspections for a while, just the occasional check to make sure they have sufficient stores and to keep a watchful eye on any rodent or woodpecker activity. We're still having some warm sunny days and I've noticed my bees doing their orientation flights, it's almost a balletic airborne dance, quite hypnotising. They also continue to forage, however I'm not sure what on as the Ivy flow is all but finished, perhaps it's the Phacelia I've noticed a local farmer growing nearby or the Michaelmas daisies and fuchsias? Whatever it is they appear keen to be out foraging even though its cooler and the hives are already brimming with stores after the ivy flow.

We've had a busy month in the club, our first indoor branch meeting since 'lockdown' in the delightful village hall at Littlebourne, which we have fortunately been able to book for the next three months meetings.

This first meeting was a riveting, information packed presentation on 'Overwintering Bee's by Adrian and Dougal (full details follow in the branch news page.) One of our new members, Anne-Marie said afterwards 'It was brilliant and I learned a lot'. There was something for everyone in this presentation, from beginners to long standing beekeepers with fascinating details on the changes to the bees in winter.

We have another great article from Andy King – 'Escape to the country' sharing his experiences of starting an out Apiary... you have to read his article to find out more about the farmer who is definitely not your archetype farmer!

Adrian has more details on the help needed for the winter work in the branch apiary at Bekesbourne, please help if you can!

Julian Audsley has made an offer to all club members to sell your honey at Bridge country market – see these details after our Magdalene Mei - Beekeepers Health edition for October.

Jan Soetaert our branch secretary also has several updates to share.

And finally, look out for Dougal's article on the free classes available for you to increase your knowledge and understanding of beekeeping. This is an exciting new opportunity being developed this year by the KBKA in associated with Dover, Medway and Thanet clubs. The classes on offer are for Module 1, however there are Modules 5 and 6 available too – drop Dougal a line to find out more.

Such a lot going on and still more to come in November and December!

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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.

OCT 2021

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

2021 YEAR PROGRAMME

October 21st to 23rd – A return of the National Honey show at Sandown Park

<https://www.honeyshow.co.uk/index.php>

The National Honey Show is an annual event held at the end of October in and around the London area, with the Venue for 2021 in Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey.

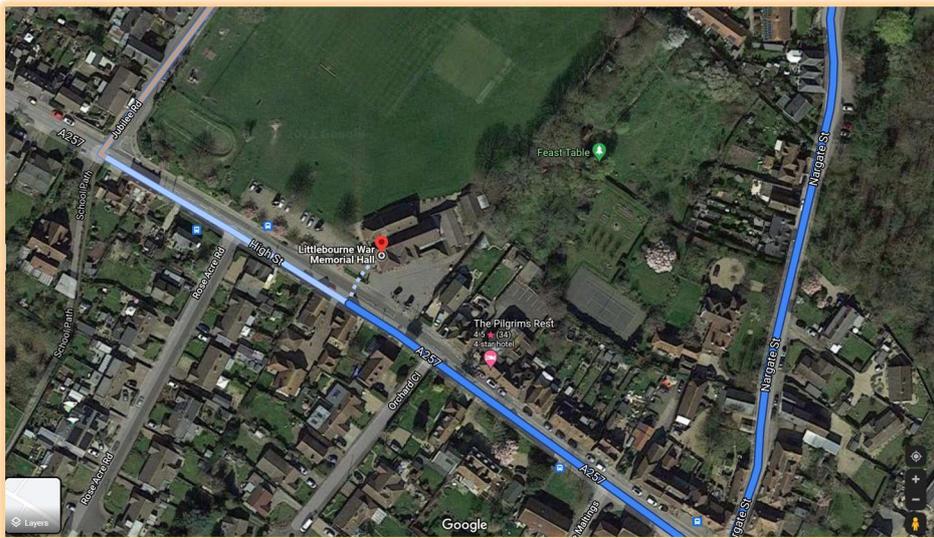
The National Honey Show has nearly two hundred and fifty Competitive Classes to test your skills and the show attracts beekeepers from all over the world to compete for the much coveted trophies and prize cards.

October 30th 2021 – Dover and District Beekeepers Association Honey Show and Competition. We've received an invitation from Maggie Harrowell the DDBKA Secretary to their Honey Show and Competition. Full details are in the 'Information from our branch secretary' section. Please do take a look at the schedule which is an invaluable aide to entering the show but also has some great tips on presentation and recipes for your honey. You may even win a prize!

November 10th 2021 – Branch Meeting to be held at Littlebourne Village Hall [Map of Littlebourne Village Hall, Littlebourne, Canterbury, Kent, United Kingdom. \(scale: 17\) \(danceweb.co.uk\)](#)

Agenda:

- AGM – details to follow nearer the time
- Pests and diseases – what to look for in your own hive
- Q&A session
- Refreshments



December 1st 2021– Christmas party to be held at Littlebourne Village Hall. Time to let your 'veils' down and enjoy an evening of fun and chat with drinks and refreshments. More details available closer to the event.

Winter work in the Apiary – Volunteers are needed at our Palmstead Apiary. Please see Adrian's article on page 5 - 'Enhancing the Apiary' and drop him a line if you can help. chairman@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk

Membership Renewals – Don't forget to renew your annual membership this month. It's quick and easy to complete on the on-line form here <https://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/membership-renewal-2021-22/>

Your club subscription enrolls you not only as a member of Canterbury Beekeeping Association but also to the BBKA and provides added benefits of the Bee Craft magazine, Insurance cover and the BBKA website which has a wealth of information available. <https://www.bbka.org.uk/>.



BRANCH NEWS

Our first indoor branch meeting since 2020!

Our first indoor Branch meeting since 2021! Held in the lovely village hall at Littlebourne with lots of space and comfortable chairs.



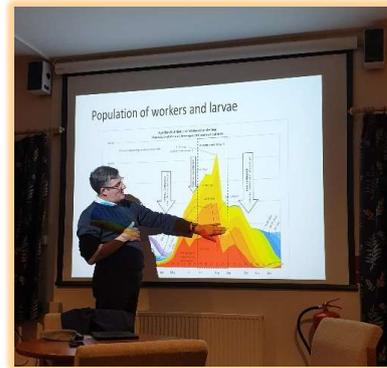
it was good to see so many familiar and new faces. This first meeting featured a presentation from Adrian Davis and Dougal Hendry on Overwintering Bees. This was a fact packed, thought provoking presentation, covering what our bees are doing in the winter months when we don't inspect them. This was much more than a list of jobs to do, it explained what is happening to our bees as they prepare for their six month marathon to keep the colony alive and thriving. It was a revelation to hear that there are 'Heater Bees', which Adrian had filmed using a thermal image camera, clearly showing individual 'super-heated' bees keeping the cluster warm at 35°.

All winter bees feed on Royal Jelly, the reason why they have an extended life span, and we were shown from a cross section image of how their bodies are full of fat deposits, completely different to a summer bee (Winter bee on the left in the picture below).



The evening was a smorgasbord of fascinating information, too much to document here, and I loved the comparison to arctic penguins who also cluster for warmth, continually taking turns to move in and

out of the cluster to maintain heat. The colder the weather, the tighter the cluster! Bees ability to control temperature means they can cope with a range of temperatures from a staggering 43°C to -30°C!



Adrian highlighting the reduction in numbers of bees in the hive from summer to winter

Dougal explained about feeding, and the importance of the bees having enough stores

from now (20kg) to last them through the winter. He also used the population graph to highlight that we only need to feed with fondant later in the winter (if needed), but once the bees need this feed, they will need it continuously until there is a nectar flow in spring!



The graph was also used to highlight why we should carry out our winter oxalic treatment earlier than previously thought, as brood levels are much lower in December than in January.

And as Dougal reminded us - in winter **we leave the bees alone!** To help us survive the withdrawal symptoms of not being able to inspect he recommended a good read - 'The biology of the Honeybee' by Mark L Winston. He also suggested that we make great use of our time by preparing frames ready for spring... you can never have enough prepared frames!

An excellent presentation with seriously useful information and thought provoking ideas. Many thanks to Adrian and Dougal.

If you'd like to see the slides used during the evening you'll find the link here.
<https://canterburybeekeepers.org.uk/2021/10/ov-erwintering-honey-bees/>

Escape to the Country – Andy King

Sometimes you can have too much of a good thing. This is certainly true for bees when they are packed in a back-garden in a dense urban setting, close to an arterial road and a busy bus stop. What could possibly go wrong?

An e-mail exchange with Julian Audsley encouraged me to approach local farmers. My lucky break happened when I noticed someone pruning apple trees early in the spring of 2020. With some trepidation, I crossed the orchard to intercept him and, to my surprise, he was not the farmer, or even the farm manager, but a contractor who was paid full-time to prune apple trees. Nevertheless, he put me in contact with the farm manager and the manager arranged a meeting between himself and the farmer (who also to my surprise was a young mum who drove heavy machinery with a baby in a papoose). Their primary concern was whether I was trustworthy as they had continuing problems with theft; my primary concern was also with theft as I was moving my precious bees out of my secure back-garden.

We spent an hour together looking for suitable places on an apple and pear orchard and, after some discussion, we agreed that a disused pheasant coup might make for the site of the apiary. It was far from public paths, in a hollow out of sight, and about 15 yards from the nearest stand of apples so as to reduce the impact of spraying. I could see a ditch and a run of woodland in the distance, so it looked promising for water and forage. Later I found out that the ditch was fed by a natural spring and orchards were packed with dandelions prior to the blossom and then (after June) there was sweet chestnut on tap. OSR was out of range.



Running an out-apiary is not as convenient as having bees at the bottom of your garden. The primary issue is access since my wife and I share a car. With caring constraints too, this has meant that I typically only spent 40 minutes on site each

week, so I quickly got into the rhythm of tip inspections when double nationals are split, and one peers into the gap to look for queen cells (a torch really helps). This worked in the sense that I did not lose any bees through swarming, but it was heavy work as all my brood boxes are made of 18mm ply. This coming season I will experiment with cedar 14*12 boxes to see if this makes for lighter and faster work.

Another difference is that I needed to be more organised. I kept 2 colonies at home which were slightly ahead of the stock at the out apiary (presumably because of differences in temperature and forage between town and country). This meant that I could use my home bees to predict what kit I would need at my out apiary (I did not have the luxury of keeping kit in the car so this was important for reducing loading and unloading time). Once, I arrived onsite in the usual rush only to find that I had two left-handed marigolds, but it turns out that you can turn one inside out in about 3 minutes, which saved a trip home. I also bought a second smoker, which I leave at the out apiary on some bricks plugged with some grass as this saves the faff of ferrying it back and forth.

The colonies built up fast on the top-fruit blossom. After reading Donald Sims' book, I followed his trick of placing stock on double stands and then moving one colony to the side so that its partner becomes super-strong the week the apple comes into blossom. I was delighted to see the supers building up fast in May, but the spring harvest was completely wiped out by the fortnight of heavy summer rains. I was gutted. Thereafter forage was more limited and the colonies developed much slower than at home. Bees in the out apiary were noticeable more twitchy too in the June gap, and I re-queened two large colonies to make them easier to work. That said, the colonies at home have required more proactive swarm control, so that at the end of the season I have now 5 colonies in my back-garden because of artificial swarming. This OK because I will over-winter them before moving all but 2 into the out apiary in the spring 2022.

Because my colonies live in a pheasant pen, space is limited and I have had problems with drifting and balancing colonies. The manager has given me permission to dismantle part of the pen over Christmas so this should give me more workspace. Weed control has also been a problem as the apiary is packed with stinging nettles, but at least it can only be accessed in a bee suit! Spraying has not been an issue at all. The bees must have helped because the manager

was keen that I expanded my stock, which I will do albeit in a modest way next season. It remains to see how the stock will fair over winter compared to those at home.

To conclude, running an out apiary is a rewarding experience. It affords the opportunity to run multiple stock and even monster colonies where gallons of bees zoom in and out of the entrance as if propelled by a fire hose. More than anything else, it adds a new dimension to bee-keeping which keeps things fresh and interesting.

Enhancing the Apiary

On a recent visit to Palmsted Wood, Andy King and I met with Chris d'Souza, who owns the wood, and we got talking about possibilities for enhancing the space around the shed. Chris was telling us about how he manages the woodland, including using felled trees to make planks and shingles. The wood is almost all sweet chestnut, and although not a common timber in commercial timber yards, it has many desirable properties: It's strong and durable so it's great for cladding, for decking, and really good for groundworks, such as fencing. It maybe not be so great as heavy structural framing timber, unless you're making a round timber frame and then it's an exciting prospect!

As a committee we discussed (pre-COVID) how we might extend the shed, to provide better



storage for equipment, and make it easier to have small groups of people help with simple jobs like making up frames, cleaning boxes etc, without the need to take equipment away.

So, putting these two ideas together, I'd like to see if any folks are interested to join a small team to work with Chris (and his partner Sally Stonier) to explore how we might deploy some of Chris' wood resources to elaborate the existing simple shed. I see this going in several stages – some scoping conversations, perhaps a visit to the wood with Chris to look at what he's got

available, then propose a design and budget. And of course, the most important part is to gather some tools together and do a branch "barn raising" activity.

In terms of timings – I suggest we try to plan in October/November, with the intention to build in the quiet months of Jan/Feb.

Please drop an email to Adrian (chairman@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk) to express interest in the planning, design or build phases of the project. Whether you are a skilled tradesperson, architect, or just a willing DIYer or tea-maker, we'd like your help!

Beekeepers Health October 2021

The Face is the PR department of our entire being. It tells the world the true condition of the person, only not many pay too much attention to it.

A simple face rubbing, use both hands to rub your face all over, of course, in a minimum of 20 seconds or more. This will stimulate all the cells on the face, enhancing the internal networking constantly in service. Why not have a variation, rubbing your face while looking downward. Observe, feel, pay attention, feel the contrast, and decide what to do next. Stay curious.

Magdalene Mei Halkes, Ministry of Body Wisdom

Do you need an outlet for your Honey?

Julian Audsley has a stall at Bridge market once a month and is happy to sell your honey if you are looking for an outlet. Julian tells me "It's good to have a selection of honey for people to choose from and the demand for local honey is high, so if anyone is looking for somewhere to sell their honey I'd be happy to help".

If you would like to take advantage of this offer, give **Julian a call on 07761839119**.

Over the Winter, would you be interested in studying beekeeping?

KBKA (of which Canterbury is a branch), jointly with the separate Dover, Medway and Thanet clubs are going to be running some **FREE** classes, open to all our members.

To make it easy for people *countywide* to attend, whether they live in Birchington or Beckenham, Sheppey or Shepway, the classes will be done

online, using Zoom. So no travelling (saving both time and fuel), no Covid concerns and the food and drink is as good as you'd get at home! (If anyone fancies doing the course but wants help with basic Zoom usage, contact me - see below.)

Each weekly session will be led by a pair of different tutors, from the various clubs and branches — so it is a great chance to hear stuff from some folks who you haven't already heard from. The format is to be a presentation followed by a group discussion covering relevant exam questions from past papers. There should also be some handout notes and suggestions for further reading.

Studying in a group tends to be more productive than flying solo, because you will inevitably learn, not just from the tutors, but also from the unexpected questions raised by your fellow students.

This Winter's course will cover the syllabus for the BBKA's "**Module 1**" written exam - though you *need not commit to sitting the exam*. (We will likely do a course around a different module, or modules, next Winter. But read on!)

Module 1 is called "**Honey Bee Management**" and covers Hives, Frames, Apiary Management, Swarming, Robbing, etc - lots of stuff of practical relevance that we all ought to know and understand properly.

Those taking the exam will have to pay an exam fee, BUT — if you pass — KBKA will refund your fee, in full! So, if you do know all this stuff already, it would cost you nothing to get a certificate to prove it. Lots of people think they know it but fail the exam — which is the reason for the classes!

This course leads towards sitting the exam next March.

It will cost you nothing to join these classes, and, you never know, you might learn something both interesting and useful!

The sessions will be **weekly** on Tuesday evenings, with a 7.30 start, and run for up to 2 hours. The first session will be on **Tuesday 2nd November** — less than a month away!

The plan is for 10 sessions to cover the syllabus, followed by 4 revision/exam technique sessions. (All for free!)

The KBKA Secretary will shortly be doing an e-mailshot to all members, including a link to the registration webpage. Registering is free, (told you), but will be required as it should really simplify

the admin for these regular meetings of (hopefully) a decent number of students.

If you don't get that email by the end of October, contact me.

Also, get in touch quickly if you fancy doing **Module 6 on Honeybee Behaviour** (which I found really interesting) or **Module 5 on Honeybee Biology** (largely anatomy, detailed and difficult with lots of scientific names to learn).

I hope lots of you will enjoy the course!

Dougal Hendry

dougal@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk

Lisa Jenkins - Product review

My favourite choice this month.

Keep your hives cosy and warm this winter with the 20 mm Insulated quilt made from recycled chip foam. It's lightweight and very flexible and fits snugly inside an empty super or brood body, or on top of your cover board. Available in all hive sizes.



Information from our branch secretary - Jan Soetaert

Anyone looking for an Apiary in Ashford?

We have the largest 'Live living wall' in Europe and are looking to find a local beekeeper who would like to set up and look after some beehives on the Roof in the McAuthorGlen outlet centre in Ashford .

Chat with members of the BBKA at the Honey Show

The BBKA will be at the National Honey Show 20th-22nd October. If you are visiting the show, do come along to the stand where you will be able to chat with Trustees and Members of the Examination Board.

BBKA Public & Product Liability Insurance 2021/22

Having reviewed the insurance market in conjunction with insurance brokers, Aston Lark, BBKA has taken out an insurance policy with Aviva that includes public & product liability cover for BBKA members for the period 4th October 2021 - 3rd October 2022.

Sometimes, members need to produce a document to prove they have insurance cover. Aston Lark has checked with Aviva and they do not issue certificates for public & product liability. In fact most insurers don't, they only issue certificates that are required by law. Instead, Aston Lark has provided a 'To Whom It May Concern' document for members to use. The policy document received from Aviva contained a few minor errors which we have asked to be corrected and once the revised document is received we will make this available too.

In the past we have put insurance documents onto the BBKA website but this year all the insurance documents will be stored on the bbkanews.com website which has undergone some work to link it with the eR2 membership database which means that only active members of the BBKA can login to the site.

Please view the instructions on how to login to www.bbkanews.com by using this link : [Instructions for BBKA Members to Access BBKA News Archive Website.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Exam Board – Show Judge Award

At the Exam Board meeting of Sunday 5th September the assessments for the Show Judge Award were discussed. The Show Judge Award is in three parts. When part one is complete candidates can apply for a Record Book which is then used for part two. There is also a final assessment.

The Exam Board agreed that:

In order to carry out interim assessments (i.e.. be Portfolio Certifiers who can sign a candidate's Record Book) a judge must:

- be qualified as a BBKA Show Judge for a minimum of 3 years,
- be able to show evidence of having judged or refereed at a minimum of 15 honey shows which had a minimum of 100 entries,
- be approved as a Show Judge Assessor by the BBKA Exam Board.

In order to carry out final assessments a judge

must:

- be qualified as a BBKA Show Judge for a minimum of 5 years,
- be able to show evidence of having judged or refereed at a minimum of 15 honey shows which had a minimum entry of 100 entries,
- be approved as a Show Judge final Assessor by the BBKA Exam Board.

It was also agreed that Hazel Blackburn will be the Senior Judge who will be the single point of contact for Show Secretaries, candidates or potential candidates who wish to be involved in this process.

The final assessment for the Show Judge Award can be held at:

The National Honey Show,
The Great Yorkshire Show,
The Highland Show,

and any other appropriate, qualifying honey show as agreed by the BBKA Exam Board.

Under this new system the Assessors for the final Show Judge assessment are:

Hazel Blackburn,
Terry Ashley,
Enid Brown,
Fiona Dixon,
John Goodwin,
Peter Matthews.

Show Judge Portfolio Certifiers (who sign a candidate's Record Book) are:

All of the above plus

Alan Brown,
Mike Duffin,
Suzy Perkins,
Dave Shannon.

Margaret Murdin, Master Beekeeper, NDB

Assistant Moderator for the practical exams.

Dover & District Honey Show - October 30th 2021

We've received an invitation for our club members to attend the Dover and District Honey show to be held at Shepherdswell Village Hall.

Maggie Harrowell writes - "We invite entries from our members, but also have open classes for any local beekeeper to have a go with their prize exhibits from what has been a dodgy year.

Last year's show was cancelled, so it might be nice to have a good show bench to look at.

I have attached the schedule of honeys, wax, wines & confectionery to be judged. So, please distribute the schedule to your members, and we look forward to some friendly competition next month! [Dover and District Beekeepers Association Honey Show and Competition Schedule | Canterbury Beekeepers](#)

Very best wishes,
Maggie Harrowell
DDBKA Secretary

News from around the world

Sleeping Bees

Nature photography never ceases to amaze. Joe Neely managed to capture two bees snuggling in the middle of an intensely orange flower and thanks to the macro effect all the tiny details of the bees are visible.



The picture happened by accident, as Neely went for a walk with his wife and in their search for Mexican poppies, they stumbled upon the tiny insects and knew they witnessed something special. After taking a closer look, they noticed that almost all the flowers from the plant had bees sleeping inside them, preparing to take a collective nap and enjoy the afternoon.

World's Most Expensive Honey

Centauri honey, harvested from an exclusive cave in Turkey, broke the record earlier this year coming in at £8,700/kg or nearly USD\$5,400/lb (Guinness World Records).

The Myth Behind "Bamboo" Honey

The jointed stems of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) closely resemble bamboo and often lead beekeepers to think their bees are producing "bamboo" honey (Bee Informed Partnership).

One of the Rarest Honeys

Kiawe honey comes from Big Island, Hawaii. The Kiawe tree is nearly extinct but can be found in

the 1000-acre forest, Puako, which is also a natural bee habitat (Forbes).

And finally don't forget...

BBKA Calendar

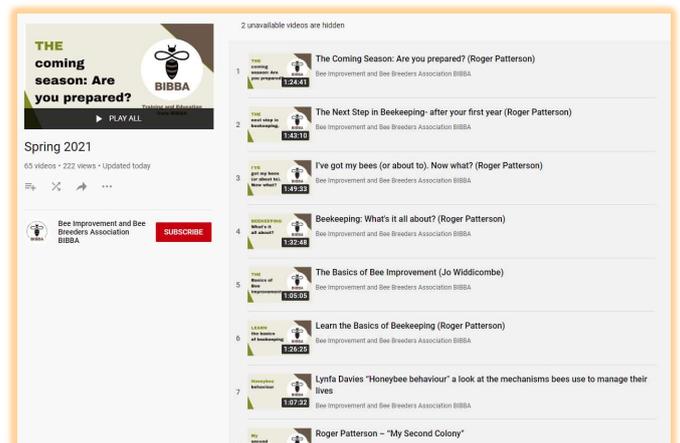
The BBKA calendar where branches can add their own events and view forthcoming lectures and much more.

<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

Happy Halloween!

