



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITORS MESSAGE

Whilst it may be slowing down now with jobs to do for the bees, somehow the bees haven't quite got the message, my bees are still out and about in the sunshine today, even though I've had them wrapped up for a while now.

However, there have been shows and meetings to keep us humans occupied. The Honey show at Sandown, with lectures to appeal to all beekeepers, beginners and experienced alike.

We also had the Dover Beekeepers DDBKA show where there was a good display of show items for judging (perhaps we could persuade a few of our members to enter next year?)

We held our own AGM in Littlebourne hall last week, where Adrian our chairman highlighted all the things we have achieved as a club this year, despite lockdown. In addition to our three Branch apiary meetings, we had some highly interesting zoom meetings – feeding your bees from Julie Coleman, Professor Tim Sparks talking about how climate change is affecting the plants our bees visit and Steve Trim from VenomTech giving a particularly riveting talk, featuring a pale snake

moving hypnotically around a glass cage in the background! And who knew that Bee venom is one of the easiest venoms to collect?

Adrian also outlined the results of our Survey, one key outcome being a desire for more face to face meetings and particularly heart-warming was that many of our members would like to mentor new beekeepers.

Andy King is currently our treasurer and Branch Apiary manager and he delighted us with some anecdotes of his apiary year as well as the formal treasury information. Andy will need to step down as Apiary manager in 2022, and volunteers to support the Branch Apiary management are invited.

New for this year and next is the free BBKA Module 1 learning classes provided by our experts in Kent. The first of these was delivered by our own Dougal Hendry on the 'History of beekeeping' and received feedback from Peter (Thanet Club), praising Dougal's knowledge, and in depth information, saying it was highly interesting and he's looking forward to the next class.

Wish everyone taking their Module One very good luck for their exam in April

Lisa

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David Cockburn

Simon Daniell

Dougal Hendry ([courses](#))

George Jenkins

Lisa Jenkins

Maggie McKenzie

Magdalene Mei Halkes

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.

NOVEMBER 2021

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

2021 YEAR PROGRAMME

DECEMBER 1ST 2021

Christmas party at Littlebourne Village Hall. Time to let your 'veils' down and enjoy an evening of fun, chat and tasty food provided by some wonderful cooks. On the menu for this festive occasion, a selection of delicious main courses prepared by Magdalene Mei:

Choose from one of the three main course options below, the cost is £10 and all dishes are served with roasted root vegetables.

- Chicken breast in grated ginger and lemon juice
- Salmon in grated ginger and lemon juice
- A Vegetarian dish

Followed by lovely puddings from Maggie McKenzie and Janet McDonald

- A tray bake ((Bakewell tart or apple and almond cake – yet to be decided)
- Mince pies
- Meringue topped with fruits and nuts

Please bring your own plates, knives, forks, spoons, glasses and serviettes - all food will be provided as individual offerings. Please bring your own drink refreshments

Keep a look out for an email arriving in your inbox soon requesting numbers of those attending to help with catering.

WINTER WORK IN THE APIARY – Volunteers needed at our Palmstead Apiary. If you are available to do a branch “barn raising” activity, with building 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!

NEW MEMBERS FOR THE COMMITTEE NEEDED

If you would like to support your club and play an active part in club activities and planning, then why not join as a committee member. Please contact Adrian (chairman@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk) to express an interest in joining the team.

BRANCH APIARY MANAGER NEEDED

Andy King has done a fabulous job as our Apiary Manager, maintaining and improving the stock and equipment during his time, using his creative and woodworking skills in much restoration and replacement of broken hives and stands for the clubs benefit. Sadly for us, Andy will be moving to an intensive new role in January and will no longer have the time to devote to the branch apiary. We are therefore looking for volunteers to look after the branch Apiary. If you would like to discuss this role further, please contact Adrian (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/>

MENTORING

Our recent survey highlighted that many of you are keen to help a new beekeeping learn their craft with your support, guidance and knowledge? Join our mentorship scheme here [local support | Canterbury Beekeepers](#)



BRANCH NEWS

Andy King – Looking forward to Christmas

Accessing my colonies right now is a muddy affair and I cannot help but think of

Ted Hughes' description of November as the month of the drowned dog. But the season of advent is around the corner. In the Christian tradition, thoughts turn to the promise of new life, and it is the very same in beekeeping as our queens begin to lay sporadically.

Last year I dangled the temperature sensor of an aquarium thermometer inside a colony through the feed hole (I actually did this for several of my stock), not because I expected to get an accurate temperature reading inside the cluster, but it allowed me to observe a temperature jump in mid-December so I knew that the queen was laying again. In that way I could stay emotionally connected with my bees, albeit through a sensor. Because of the fuff of cleaning up the sticky thermometer leads in the spring, this winter I will rely solely on my eyes (which are pretty advanced as sensors go). I love to observe the rush of water collectors hurrying back to the hive around midday when the weak winter sun is at its highest. So I will keep watch for them, for also incoming pollen, which is another tell-tell sign of new life.



Christmas 2020 was special for me because our garage roof with alive with bees. It is a south-facing roof, pitched at 45 degrees and its heavy clay tiles are encrusted with an almost continuous mat of green moss. The orientation, colour and moisture retained by the moss, make it perfect for water collecting bees who can drink without have to dip their feet into the cold, dank waters of next door's ornamental fish pond.

I always think that water collectors are particularly impressive members of the colony: they fly at death-defying low temperatures and, for the sake

of the colony, take on huge risk as their body temperatures drop while taking on their load. Water is needed to dilute the dry stores (ivy honey) so that the bees can maintain the vital 50:50 ratio of sugar to water in their honey stomach needs to both maintain themselves and feed their ravenous larvae.

Park studied water carriers as early as 1928 and he pointed out that they mark the location of their water source by using their feet and their Nasanov glands. This is presumably because water is weak on scent. I've never seen this myself so this Christmas, perhaps even on Christmas day, I'll get the step ladder out and prop it up against the garage to more closely observe the water carriers on the roof. This will confirm my wife's, families and neighbours' suspicions that I've finally gone completely mad. But I won't mind, I'll be happy.

Beekeepers Health November 2021

I often hear elderly friends saying to me, "My fingers are always cold?"

My response is always the same, 'The hands are part of your body, don't treat them like aliens, do something about it.'

Consider a simple trick by rubbing your baby finger and ring finger, for 20 seconds, take a break, and then do it again. Very soon you will feel the difference.

Warm hands ease your shoulders leading to comfortable breathing. Stay curious and give your fingers some 'me time'.



Magdalene Mei Halkes, Ministry of Body Wisdom

Mark Hobday - Product review My favourite choice this month.

This month it's a delight to have a product review from one of our new members Mark Hobday.



My favourite tool this month is the "gimp pin pusher" no more bent nails, no noisy banging and in my view, it is faster than using a hammer – but only works with steel pins (magnetic), on softwood and does require a little force to use it. It is expensive, but it's a tool for

life. Perhaps others in the club have highlighted its use when constructing frames, but something to consider

Best wishes, Mark

Grove Ferry. Preston and Surroundings Villages group



Janet McDonald hosted a lovely evening of cheese, wine, nibbles and lots of bee chat for the members of the group. Pictured here from the left are Heather, Janet, Lisa, George and Jen.

Bee 'Stuff'

Helping the bees fight Varroa

An article recently featured on Facebook – where researchers are looking at the bacteria *Snodgrassella Alvi* living within the gut of honeybees, which may, after being genetically

modified have some effect on the Varroa mites. It's early days yet, but it shows much research is being done

<https://www.the-scientist.com/news-opinion/engineered-microbe-in-bees-guts-fends-off-deadly-varroa-mite-67048>



Asian Hornet Alert

Many of us will have seen the recent news about an Asian Hornet nest being discovered a couple of weeks ago, at Ascot in Berkshire. It was one of the local beekeepers who raised the alarm, having spotted the workers 'hawking' in front of his hives. Just goes to show how valuable it is to stand and watch our hives for usual/unusual activity for a few minutes first, when arriving to check them. The bee inspectors succeeded in tracking the nest down a few days later and it has now been removed and taken to the NBU laboratory at York for inspection and genetic analysis. There will hopefully be a full write-up of the incident in the December edition of Bee Craft.



Asian Hornets decimating an Apiary in Brittany France earlier this year – in 48 hours 24 colonies had been wiped out

Information from our branch secretary - Jan Soetaert

BBKA Insurance

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](#)

Leigh Sidaway

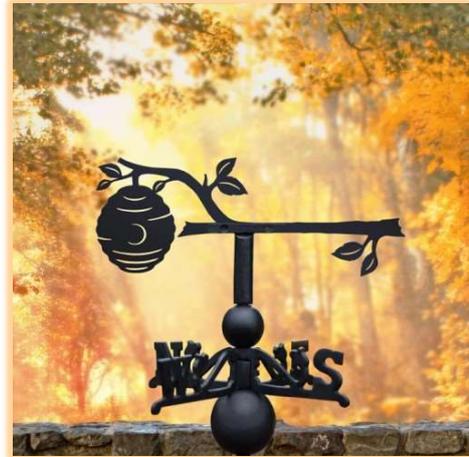
Other zoom meetings

Medway beekeepers are advertising their programme of winter talks - a mixture of online and face-to-face meetings. If you would like to know more, please contact archie.mclellan@medwaybeekeepers.co.uk for details.

The Central Association of Beekeepers has their usual interesting winter programme available, with details at <http://www.cabk.org.uk/events> - and you don't have to be a member of CABK to attend these online talks.

And Finally...

Now that's what I call a weathervane for a beekeeper!



... And there always has to be one exception!

