



CANTERBURY BEEKEEPERS



A branch of Kent Beekeepers Association

EDITORS MESSAGE

My word, what a warm July we've had! July is the time when the bees are at their busiest getting nectar and pollen in and making honey and this year looks to be much better than last.

The recent heat wave has, however caused some concern especially where bees are in exposed plots. Adequate water has been an essential item needed near colonies.

Whilst the bees have been building up their supplies, the wasps have also started to appear around the apiary, so, fingers crossed that the extreme heat has passed as it time to think about narrowing the entrances for wasp defences. Fortunately to my amusement, one of my colonies, have propolised the whole entrance leaving one tiny hole – one less for me to do!

Swarming has slowed down and the queens are laying less at this time of year, so it's also a good time to think about brood frame replacement and varroa checks. I've seen a lot of

bald brood in the last month and capped comb with pin prick holes in them. When you investigate and remove the larvae, it usually has a varroa, or several snuggled up on the little body. The bees seem able to sense when something is not quite right with a larvae which is why they pierce the

cappings to get a better 'smell'. If you notice a lot of pierced capping and/or bald brood, you might want to consider a varroa check.

And finally, there's the sweet/sour joy of extracting. We've probably forgotten how much hard work this is after missing this chore last year. Remember the bees will need room when you clear them from the super, so you might want to have a spare super standing by if they are very

crowded and don't forget to leave one super for the bees as their winter stores.

It's all a sweet reward but beware the silent assassin of an unattended open valve. Honey is a silent sneaky assailant if you forget to turn the valve off! And it's a blasted nuisance to clean, the stickiness goes on for ever!

Lisa

Next Meeting

**Sat 6th
August
Bee Safari**

10am to 3:30pm

**Visit a
selection of
members
apiaries in the
company of
your local
seasonal bee
inspector.**

**Tea and cakes
provided.**

CBKA Officers

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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.

AUGUST 2022

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

newsletter@canterburybeekeepers.org.uk

2022 YEAR PROGRAMME

06 AUGUST 2022 SAFARI MEETING - THE 2ND COMING!

A great way to experience how other members set up their apiaries and share ideas.

This is just like the American supper or Safari parties of the 70's and 80's but with bees.

- Volunteer beekeepers offer to open their apiary to visitors.
- You arrive in your car with a clean bee suit, boots and gloves to visit the first bee keeper on the list. **Cleanliness is imperative and good etiquette when visiting**
- The visit is led by the local Bee Inspector, showing tips on how to look for bee diseases – with opportunities to ask lots of questions.
- The group then drive to the next apiary and the tour continues for the remaining apiaries.
- The last apiary have very kindly promised tea and cakes!

Now that Covid protocols are less of an issue, you may want to consider car sharing!

Full details will be sent via email next week.

EXTRACTION MEETING. AUGUST

Demonstration of honey extraction – details to be advised

THE BIG JAR EVENT – DETAILS TO FOLLOW SOON!



BROGDALE EVENTS – VOLUNTEERS AND HONEY NEEDED

- Apple festival 15th and 16th October

We are looking for volunteers to man the stall, this is a fun day talking with the public, If you are a new beekeeper, don't worry, you will know more than they do! So come along, it's a pleasant day in the lovely Brogdale atmosphere with lots of honey for people to taste and buy.

If you have honey you would like to sell, this is also an ideal opportunity to get your label on display!

Please contact Maggie McKenzie on maggiemckenzie@vfast.co.uk for details



BRANCH NEWS

Balancing Up in High Summer – Dr Andy King

Beekeeping like a Saint

Inhabitants of St Helena Island in the South Atlantic call themselves saints. They are endangered species since the island has a population of only 4000 and like so many islands they export their most treasured assets (their young people) hence the island faces an uncertain future. St Helena has about 200 managed bee colonies and one of their most successful beekeepers, Mark Coleman, was visiting his daughter, Marcella, in Canterbury as she had won a scholarship to study in the UK. Marcella arranged the meeting between myself and her father, and I took both of them to my out-apiary so that we could discuss beekeeping techniques while we worked my bees. Mark spoke in a strong, local dialect called Saint, where “nutting” means “nothing,” but after a while we began to tune into each other tongue and language was no longer a barrier to communication.

Beekeeping is not for the faint-hearted on St Helena. Beekeepers do not have the rich resources that we have and, for example, have to make their own hives from ¾ inch timber before even they can even start with bees. They do not have access to full bee suits (only veils). I was perplexed to see that Mark struggled by the zip configuration on his suit, but this is because he had never worn full PPE before! Bees are normally sourced from swarms, and sometimes cut out of cavities, so there is no selection for queens with good genetics either. Hence beekeepers on the island have become adept to working aggressive bees with minimal body protection using lots of smoke.

Mark knew that queens could be selected for gentleness but had never appreciated how relaxing it was to work a colony headed by a gentle queen. As far as he knows, he is the only saint who has attempted queen rearing, so we had an interesting discussion about the frustrations of the Nicot method, and the value of a Cloake board. His plan, now he has retired from working on the neighbouring Ascension island (only 800 miles away!), was start breeding gentler queens to sell to other beekeepers. We both agreed that there was a business opportunity there. He was twitchy about taking off his veil near the car, about 20m away from the colonies, as he expected a kamikaze bee to bury itself in his ear. I had to assure him that it would be OK and sure enough we continued our discussion, unhindered by followers, as we took off our PPE and then gulped down our water.



Andy King with Mark Coleman

Mark also had not appreciated the value of flat wax foundation. This is unobtainable on the island (though Mark has recently bought a wax press so that he make his own from rendered wax). Mark watched open-eyed as I withdrew frames and then slid them back without rolling bees. He explained that saints normally cut off comb from a swarm and then use elastic bands to hold them in frames, but that brace comb is a continual obstacle to management. Hence frames are not really interchangeable. This makes beekeeping manipulations that we take for granted almost impossible. So Mark had

never seen a paper unite before (I was united two small colonies ready for the summer flow) and he was amazed how easy it was to reorganise the frames from the top and bottom brood boxes into a single coherent colony. It was, of course, because the comb was flat because it was drawn from flat wax foundation, something that we take completely for granted.

Mark is clearly intent on introducing modern beekeeping techniques to the island (which is why his daughter arranged the meeting) and I think that he is driven enough to pull it off. If you can harvest 100+ jars each year, working those bees with minimal PPE, you have to be passionate about bees. I cannot wait to meet him again when his daughter graduates and, of course, I got an open invite to visit the island and work his bees (but I don't think that I'm tough enough).

Rev Magdalene Mei Halkes, Ministry of Body Wisdom

July is heavy lifting time, be gentle to all your joints. Here are a few keys to remind you to pay attention to your body:

- Rub your wrists all over
- Raise your eyebrows and hold for a count of 5 or more
- Rub your ears till you feel the heat rising

It would be great to hear from you what you discover from using these keys.

It has been extremely hot lately. There is a simple tea to keep you cool.

Add a few crushed cardamoms in the water for your tea, bring the water to boil and simmer for a couple of minutes, make the tea as normal.

Enjoy.

Rev Magdalene Mei Halkes,
Ministry of Body Wisdom

Information from our branch secretary - Jan Soetaert

Festival of Bees (and it's in our part of the country)

Dear beekeepers,

We would like to invite you and your association members to the Festival of Bees, just as we did for BeeTradex earlier this year.

The festival will take place on Saturday September 3rd at the prestigious and historic University Of Greenwich, Medway Campus in Chatham, Kent. As the world of beekeeping and pollination moves forward with new and innovative ideas, we thought why shouldn't our shows be the same?

There will be plenty of activities on site, from lectures from some of the best Beekeepers in the UK, exhibitions, educational talks and demonstrations - which will all be free to attend. Alongside trade stands from a multitude of traders in the industry, food and drink stalls, and beekeeping taster events on site.

We would like to offer some free tickets to your association, unfortunately this will be on a first come basis due to the limitations of the event and the current popularity of the tickets - all we can say is don't waste any time getting this offer to your members!

Please use the code - ASSOCIATION - when you get to the checkout to obtain your free tickets. Members will be required to show proof of membership to an association at the gate.

You can get your tickets here: <https://festival-of-bees.com/>

