



# KENT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

County Newsletter

No. 60

March 2012

It is extremely important at this time of year to keep an eye on stores. We have had periods of very mild weather when the bees have been out and about foraging. They are not the only creatures looking for food and during a particularly hard winter birds and mammals have a tough time. There are plenty of bird feeders on the market which are designed to keep out the larger, more aggressive birds and squirrels and allow robins, blue tits and the like to feed but woodpeckers have discovered a ready source of food i.e. the contents of a beehive.

I have regular visits from two green woodpeckers who keep my lawn aerated and a couple of greater spotted have discovered the suet balls hanging in one of my trees. During January I heard the familiar drumming sound they make and did wonder about my hives. So far I have been lucky and they haven't been targeted but woodpeckers can and do cause considerable damage.

To prevent a sound hive with many more years of life in it being reduced to a state where it is simpler to make a new one rather than try and repair, woodpecker guards have been designed by two members from Ruxley branch, Peter Jones and Barry Kemp, and have been constructed by members of the club. The design makes it almost impossible for the woodpecker's beak to access the hive wood and so cause damage and on warmer days the bees can come and go without hindrance.



Some of you may already know Robert Therry at Bouin-Plumaison. If you are in Montreuil in the Pas de Calais, then it is worth finding the time for a visit. You'll find him on the D349 2 miles from Hesdin. I too was there a few years ago along with a party of school children when extraction was the topic of the day. On discovering not only a couple of English beekeepers in their midst but also one who spoke very good French, my husband was interviewed by someone from the local radio station; whether his comments were broadcast I do not know. In early September (I think it is the second weekend but you will need to check) they hold a honey fair when, amongst other things you can watch extraction and purchase some of the honey straight from the frame and into the jar.



Mary Slater and Bob Jackman have a lot of fun during the summer talking to Beavers groups and school children. As they say in February's Beecraft, plenty of beekeepers visit schools and organise visits to their apiaries and almost all teachers will have the children doing follow-up work. The B Kids pages encourage young beekeepers so lets have a few more entries at the National this year for "An exhibition by schools of school bee craft". Children are, after all, the next generation of beekeepers so why not "catch 'em young".

## Around the Branches

### Ashford

2<sup>nd</sup> March Talk by John Hendrie on brood diseases

Winter meetings are held at St Mary's Hall, Rylands Road, Kennington at 7.30 p.m.

### Bromley

The annual lecture programme is as follows:

20<sup>th</sup> March Pat Allen: The many uses of a nucleus hive

17<sup>th</sup> April The Peter Springall Memorial lecture given by Norman Carreck:  
Breeding bees for hygienic behaviour to fight varroa

These lectures take place in the main pavilion at 91a Kent House Road, SE23 5LJ at 7.30 p.m. There is no charge and refreshments are provided

Branch meetings are on the first Sunday of the month at 11.30 a.m. Kent House Road apiary

### Canterbury

7<sup>th</sup> March Talk on the short haired bumblebee reintroduction project  
by Dr Nikki Gammans

Meetings at 7.30 p.m. at Whitefriars Conference Room, Canterbury

### Dartford

10<sup>th</sup> March Terry Clare: Queen rearing for the small beekeeper

All meetings will commence promptly at 3.00 p.m. and are being held in the upper room at Asda's Warehouse on the Crossway Industrial Estate

### Gravesend

25<sup>th</sup> March Talk by Dr Mike Lynn: Seasonal Menu for Bees. Cobham Hall School 2.00-4.00 p.m. i.e. what are our bees foraging for throughout the year?

14<sup>th</sup> April Setting up new out apiary at Cobham Hall 2.00 p.m. onwards

22<sup>nd</sup> April Taster day – review and practical; Cobham Hall School 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

### Mid Kent

20<sup>th</sup> March Dr Sam Andrews: The medicinal uses of bee products

Apiary meetings on the third Sunday of each month from April to August

### Orpington

14<sup>th</sup> March Talk by Nick Withers: A glimpse of beekeeping in Australia  
8.00 p.m. at Atomwide offices

5<sup>th</sup> May Demonstration at Coolings Green & Pleasant, Main Road, Knockholt 1.00-3.00 p.m.

Branch meetings every Saturday at 2.30 p.m. from April to September at the apiary at BEECHE Centre, High Elms

### Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells

13<sup>th</sup> March Rudy Repka: Beekeeping in Turkey

This meeting will be at Weald Memorial Hall, TN14 6PS and will start at 7.30 p.m.

See website for details of apiary meetings which start at 2.00 p.m. at Barrwood Apiary and Hilbert Road Summer Apiary unless otherwise stated.

### Sidcup

Weekly meetings at 2.00 p.m. at Baldwyns Apiary. Please see website

### Weald

31<sup>st</sup> March Spring inspection with John Osborne at his apiary

14<sup>th</sup> April Swarm control with Nick Mengham

26<sup>th</sup> May Hive inspection and queen rearing with Roger Patterson at his apiary in Sussex

## **Westerham**

28th March

"Make do and mend". Spring clean equipment, make up frames and a chance to chat while you work!

25<sup>th</sup> April

Diane Steele will talk on swarm control

Both the above at Westerham Hall 8.00 p.m.

## **Yalding and District**

Monthly meetings take place at The Chequers Inn, Laddingford, ME18 6BP. Meetings start at 8.00 p.m.

**Please also see branch websites for details of branch meetings, lectures and courses.**

## **County and other events 2012**

Friday to Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> April **Spring Convention**

This year the Spring Convention will be at a new venue, Harper Adams University College Campus, Newport, Shropshire which offers greatly improved lecture and workshop facilities. It is offering a broader programme with new courses and a bigger and better trade show

Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> May **Bee Fayre and Auction**

Following previously successful auctions held by Chris Morris in his Yalding field, the event is being organised this year by the Yalding and District Beekeepers Association (YDBKA), and it is hoped to 'upgrade' the event to a more family-friendly Bee Fayre, but still with the traditional beekeepers auction taking place as normal.

Friday to Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July **Kent County Show, Detling**

Stewards are always needed so please make a note of the dates in your diary. Details will be circulated nearer the event

Thursday to Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October **81<sup>st</sup> National Honey Show**

St. George's College, Weybridge. The show schedule will be available in August