

Diary Dates

Tuesday 21st February 2006 - A talk by Roy Cropley “All you should know and what you don’t now about honey”.
Starts at 7.30pm at the branch club house.

Sunday 5th March 2006 - Branch apiary meeting starts
11.45am Tea and biscuits provided.

Saturday 11th March - Central Association of Beekeepers Spring Conference @ Roots and Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, Kennington Road, Lamberth, London. Starts 11.00am. See website www.cabk.org.uk for full details.

Tuesday 21st March 2006 - A Talk by Professor Lars Chitcka “How bees can recognise our faces”. Starts at 7.30pm at the branch club house.

Sunday 2nd April 2006 - Branch apiary meeting starts
11.45am Tea and biscuits provided.

Tuesday 18th April 2006 – A talk by Clive Newitt of Exomite “Combating Varroa resistance”. Starts at 7.30pm at the branch club house.

Friday 21st April 2006 - BBKA Members Day at Stoneleigh.
See website www.bbka.org.uk for more details.

Saturday 22nd April 2006 - BBKA Spring Convention a Stoneleigh. See website www.bbka.org.uk for more details.

For more information

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Visit our website www.kentbee.com/bromley

Bromley Bee News Monthly Update Published by the Bromley Beekeepers Association

Welcome to the **February 2006** issue of Bromley News.

I have some sad news that Tony our Polish member who has always manned the observation hive at all our summer events has suffered a very bad stroke. His wife Barbara told me that his allotment days are now over. We send our love and best wishes hoping for an improved outcome.

This month we include a section from the NBU - South East Region newsletter by Alan Byham dated Dec 2005. The full version can be download from the website: www.kentbee.com/files/sen26-12-05.pdf
The map shows that resistant mites are now much closer or are here now, therefore we need urgently to master other varroa control methods.

I'm looking forward to starting up my beekeeping this Spring. I shall be giving up my allotment and moving the two hives to a new apiary site. My new apiary site is a friends' garden in Bargery Road, Catford. This will give my bees the chance to forage in the conservation area, where I have a large number of honey customers. I have the suspicion this property was formally owned by another beekeeping as I discovered some old wax foundation in the shed/workshop at the bottom of the garden while helping clear out some junk. I will be interested to find out who the beekeeper was. *Steven Turner*

Internet News

National Diploma in Beekeeping

The National Diploma in Beekeeping Examinations Board now have a website: www.national-diploma-bees.org.uk

Meerkats not Bees

I can recommend hours of fun watching the Meerkat webcam. You can observe a family group of meerkats that live at the Cricket St Thomas Wildlife Park.. Visit the website:

www.thewebbroadcastingcorporation.com/cricket_cctv1.php

NBU Newsletter

A heavy workload for the team of inspectors make the totals for the south east look impressive. A total of 814 apiaries were inspected with nearly 5000 (4954) colonies being checked. 50 apiaries/135 colonies were found to have EFB in the region but only 2 apiaries/3 colonies had AFB. This is roughly 6% of apiaries with EFB so do keep a look out, also for AFB even though it is seemingly rare in the south east. A more comprehensive view of the inspection programme follows at the end of this letter.

Inspectors not only look for foulbrood but also check for the presence of exotic pests such as Small Hive Beetle (SHB) and Tropilaelaps. The inspections are carried out in areas that are considered to be "at risk", so if you seem to have inspections more frequently than previously, this may be the reason. Areas near to ports, airports, fruit markets and centres of population are some of the localities considered to be at risk.

We also check for pyrethroid resistant Varroa whilst inspecting colonies and have found that, as expected, this is gradually spreading throughout the region. The map shows apiaries where resistance has been found but I think that this gives a false picture of what is really happening. The bee unit considers mites that are less than 60% susceptible to pyrethroid strips fully resistant (IE those where less than 60% of mites are killed when using Bayvarol or Apistan strips) and these are the apiaries shown on the map. I know that when I carry out tests for resistance that there are many colonies where the results are 70-80% susceptibility – obvious signs of resistant mites in the colony but not the correct criteria to appear on the map. Of course the map only shows those apiaries that have been tested, there are many more that have not and which may well have mite resistance.

In my own experience, now is not the time for complacency. My partner, Carol and I treated our colonies with Apiguard in August, when the weather was good and warm, and having had a good mite drop were happy about the number of remaining varroa in the colonies. We decided to check the natural mite drop in late November and so placed slides under the open mesh floors – shock horror, over 30 mites in one night from one colony and the same on the following night!! Obviously immediate action was needed so treatment was carried out, with the result that over 1000 mites were removed from the colony with the 30 mite drop and over 500 from another colony nearby. I thought about this incident and decided that with the autumn being so mild, and colonies working well very late into the year, it has meant that there has been brood present in reasonable amounts. In fact the colony with the worst mite drop still has 1.5-2 frames of brood (Dadant frame) present at the beginning of December. This late brood rearing has resulted in a corresponding increase in the varroa mite population. I suspect that this will have occurred in many colonies in the south east, so if you have open mesh floors, check now for natural mite drop and treat straight away if you need to!

Alan Byham Regional Bee Inspector, South East Region

Apiary News

It was great to see the little darlings flying again on Sunday after being confined for the winter. Not that winter is over yet and a few sunny days can lead one to think that spring is on the way. Don't allow yourself to be deceived, more stocks are lost through starvation at this time of the year than at any other. What can you do about it?

Well first it's a good idea to assess how much stores your stocks have in the larder. If they are fitted with glass quilts it's easy to just raise the lid and peek inside with as little disturbance as possible, if the bees are all huddled near the top that is the danger sign if the bees are all deep down and you can see combs of sealed honey all is well for another couple of weeks. If you don't have glass quilts you will need to resort to feeling the weight of the hive by lifting on one side then the other. If you have more than one hive in the apiary then it's easy to make comparisons.

If you are worried, the best action is a slab of candy over the feed hole or, failing that a feed of sugar syrup but it must be from a contact feeder not the more usual up and over type of feeder.

The next meeting will be in the Clubhouse on Tuesday 21st February 2006 at 7:30pm when Roy Cropley will be explaining all you should know and what you don't now about honey.

Following that a month later on the Tuesday 21st March 2006 we have Professor Lars Chitcka talking about his research into how bees can recognise our faces, something that doesn't surprise me one little bit. The final talk in this years' series will be on Tuesday 18th April 2006 when Clive Newitt of Exomite will be talking about his way of combating Varroa resistance to the chemicals we are currently using to combat them.

Peter Springall