

MID-KENT BRANCH  
KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION  
**NEWSLETTER**

January 2012



**January Star Sign - Capricorn**

Capricornus – one of the most ancient signs. Half goat, half fish, one of the rustic spirits, he was placed in the heavens as a constellation by Zeus in reward for coming to the aid of Zeus in his battle with Typhoeus – one of the Titans, a monstrous giant that caused storms.



**A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS**

Notes from the Chair

**Happy New Year to all our readers.**

I hope that you all had a wonderful time with family and friends and are now ready to welcome 2012.

On a beekeeping note I hope that you have carried out your winter varroa treatment on your bees. Whatever method you use it's better that it's done now on a non-flying day for the bees (cold and frosty mornings are the best) so that your bees have a good start for the spring. Preparation is in full swing for our MKBKA Honey Show and I would ask that as many of you as possible participate in what we hope will be fun and enjoyable. Honestly it's just for our branch and if our judge finds a leg, wing or thorax in the honey then it keeps him happy and something he can talk about.

Well once again time for me to get onto the Wii fit in the hope to lose at least one turkey sandwich and a curry by the end of the month.

Dick Cullen - Chairman  
[cullen5316@btinternet.com](mailto:cullen5316@btinternet.com)

The most important consequence is the food store status of hives. The cluster will maintain a temperature of between 20 – 30°C (see Hooper p60-61 for detail). The cluster also needs a supply of water to dilute the honey. The main risk for the colony is that as we progress into February and the queen begins to lay, then the temperature needs to be raised to 32 - 36°C or the brood will die. This is the point at which the colony can starve and fail.

This month's tips as last year are: -:

1. If you are making candy to provide supplementary feeding then use a sugar thermometer. They can be purchased online or from larger kitchen departments in stores for £7 - £10. (*alternatively save yourself time and buy a 12kg box from a baker for £19/£20) or in Tesco/Sainsbury/Asda but it is relatively more expensive pro rata although more conveniently packaged and ideal if you have a couple of hives. Cut the 500g plastic package into 4 and put it over an open feedhole. If the cluster is at the top of the brood box it could be a danger sign and they are in need of food. If you have spare sealed frames of honey (always an idea to hold back a few) it would be an idea to put a super above the brood with the frames of honey directly above the cluster with one or two cells uncapped to attract the bees up.*
2. If you fitted mouse guards to your hives that are the perforated holes in strip type, check that dead bees do not obstruct them. There will be low-level losses from the colony through the winter and particularly with narrowed entrances fitted there is a risk of blockage. (*it is a good idea to fit the blocks with the entrance uppermost as a layer of dead bees will not then obstruct the entrance*)

. There will be a meeting of the branch committee in February.. Please send either an e-mail or call Barbara Harris if there is an issue that you would like raised.

**January Meeting**  
**Detling Village Hall**

**Please note the change of venue**

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012**  
**at 7.30 pm**

**Dr Nikki Gammans Bumblebee Conservation**

**February Meeting 14<sup>th</sup>!**

**Branch Honey Show**  
**At East Malling Research**  
**Centre**

**(see last month for preparation notes from**  
**Mary Hill)**

**Oxalic Acid Treatment**

**This needs to be carried out as soon as possible- temperature permitting – remember bees fly at above 5 deg C. Wear a veil!**

**Beekeeping Equipment**

Do you remember that late spring day when you were dealing with a captured swarm or one of your hives looked as if it was about to swarm? But somehow you never seem to have enough equipment ready to hand! Perhaps now is the time to take advantage of the Thorne sale. Also look out for the new range of equipment being marketed by Maisemore.

**If you wish to occupy your long winter evenings preparing for next season by making up frames/re-waxing cleaned existing frames, and require foundation, please let me know in advance: BS deep £6.50 per 10 wired: BS shallow £4.00 per 10 wired. I have a limited number of frames, and also boxes of 3/4" gimp pins at £3.50 per 500g. Hoffman frames: £6.00 per 10. *ed***

I have attached the National Bee Unit end of year report for those who have not registered with Beebase.

**Last year Michelle has sent this link to a very interesting development in the fight against varroa**  
**[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/1/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_9306000/9306572.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/1/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_9306000/9306572.stm)**

Your comments and contributions are as ever most welcome and valued

***Ed: david.wood63@tiscali.co.uk***