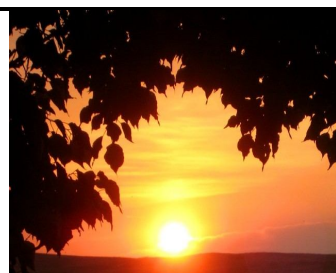
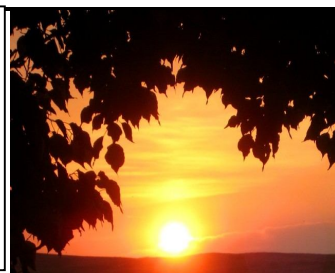


# MID-KENT BRANCH KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

June 2011



Midsummer's Day – 24<sup>th</sup> June  
The Summer Solstice Festival, known originally as Litha, is called 'Feill-Sheathain' in Wales and the name 'Alban Hefin', may be Pictish in origin (connected to the 9<sup>th</sup> century kingdom of Alban, which combined Scots and Picts). This was also the time of the Roman Festival, Vestalia. The word solstice comes from the Latin term 'solstitium', which translates into English as 'sun standing still'.



The May branch meeting was very well attended with about 30 members present. Briefing took place for those who were entering the Basic exam in the week ahead. Various aspects of beekeeping were tackled, including artificial swarming, demonstrated together with one way of dealing if the queen could not be found. I must admit that we could have improved the presentation – I hope you weren't too confused!

**Swarming** Like June 'is bustin' out all over'. Now is not the best time to be making up frames as the swarm hangs from a branch in the apiary! One member at least can vouch for some very strange bee haviour. Swarms have issued with clipped queens more than once from the same hive. I suppose it must be a case of 'if you've gotta go, you've gotta go!' Sometimes it is difficult to find all the queen cells on a frame and this can be the cause of a swarm issuing and apparently this was even after an artificial swarm manipulation was carried out. It rapidly becomes obvious that more equipment is needed the more colonies there are in the apiary. As a rule, per colony an extra brood box complete with frames and foundation, crown board and division board (like a crown board but with a 150mm square hole covered with mesh) with entrance is the minimum needed. Ideally to carry out an artificial swarm an additional floor and roof will be required as well as a copy of the BBKA News earlier this year just in case you missed last month's meeting.

If you suspect EFB, a notifiable disease, Michael Cooper, the bee inspector, will carry out the tests. If you have more than one hive, clean hive tools between inspecting each hive using a solution of washing soda and a drop of washing up liquid. Typical indicators of EFB are: -

- Erratic or uneven brood pattern [
- Larvae adopt unnatural positions in the cells
- Twisted larvae with creamy-white guts visible through the body wall
- Melted down, yellowed larvae, almost like wax
- Unlike AFB, the remains of larvae that die from EFB do not rope when drawn out with a matchstick.
- An unpleasant sour odour
- Loosely-attached brown scales

**June Gap** At the start of June many wild flowers and trees begin to set seed and the nectar source for bees can become reduced with a shortage of food. This is commonly known as the 'June Gap'. Check food reserves in the hive and supplementary feed if necessary. With the dry weather even those plants in bloom (blackberry is already out here) may not produce nectar, and colonies where too much has been removed may need feeding otherwise they may well starve. Don't be greedy and be vigilant.

## Notes from the Chair

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 7 members from our branch went to the branch apiary to take the Basic Examination, where John Hendrie, General Secretary of the KBKA assessed them. By all accounts, nerves apart, a great couple of days. Congratulations so far for the members who underwent this 'ordeal' and hopefully more will follow in their footsteps after they have been keeping bees for the required year (if you are considering please can you let me know in the next few months so that we can prepare for the course in January 2012).

It has finally started to rain!!! There is no doubt that not only the bees need a bit of water but so did my garden. Everything is flowering so early, blackberries and foxgloves in full bloom - nice but the flowers are not lasting very long and I do wonder how big the potatoes will be. Please if you do have to water the garden, make sure that you make an area where the bees can have a drink and but not drown.

The apiary meeting at EMR was again well supported. An enjoyable afternoon about swarm control concluding with teas and biscuits and a chat with some of our members. If you would like to come please do so at our next meeting details as below.

**JUNE MEETING**

**Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup> 2011 @2.30 p.m.**

**Apiary Meeting at Branch Apiary Bradbourne House East Malling Research dealing with extraction**

If you wish to contact me with ideas for our winter meetings or problems about what we are doing or not doing for you as a member of the Mid Kent Branch please email me or speak to one of our other committee members.

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

**APIGUARD NOW!**

Now is the time for all good beekeepers to come and place their orders for Apiguard! I will be ordering boxes sufficient for the treatment of 5 colonies for a very attractive price of £18. In order to treat at the end of August, I must have payment with your order **BY THE END OF JUNE**. This will mean that I can possibly distribute at the July/August meeting. Unless I can place an order totalling in excess of £200, postage will have to be added.

**County Association needs your help**

Request for stewards to help on the Beekeeping displays at the Kent County Show at Detling. It is a worthwhile experience. For being a volunteer on one or more of the days (the more days that you can offer, the more time you will have to wander around!), you will get free entry and have time to wander round between your stewarding shifts. Please respond directly to Bob Smith [bsmith12@ntlworld.com](mailto:bsmith12@ntlworld.com) or call 02083001807

**Please find a copy of the Honey Show Competition Rules and entry form attached. The success of the show depends on your entries: it's not the winning that is important, it's the taking part that counts!**

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