

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

May 2010



Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger, comes dancing from the east, and leads with her the flowery May, who from her green lap throws the yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose. Hail, bounteous May, that doth inspire mirth, and youth, and warm desire; Woods and groves are of thy dressing, hill and dale doth boast thy blessing, thus we salute thee with our early song, and welcome thee, and wish thee long. John Milton



To begin with thank you for all of the attendees at the April branch meeting. The segregation into small groups worked well and sincere thanks to our experienced members that led the group teaching. I hope that those members who attended the 'Beginners Course' found it a satisfying conclusion to the course, and each one received a certificate of attendance.

For the ex boy scouts and girl guides amongst us this month's motto with nostalgic elements is 'Be Prepared' (not Bob-a-job!!), principally for two reasons; swarms and honey production. Both require preparedness with equipment to hand. I'm sure every experienced beekeeper can tell a tale of rushing around to gather together equipment before a swarm flew away from a settling place on a branch. In a good May with a good nectar flow it's surprising how quickly a colony can fill a super and nectar from Oilseed Rape is good for drawing out foundation, and not a lot else! We can only hope for a sustained period of higher temperatures to enable the bees to fly and the flowers to produce nectar accompanied by conditions of sufficient humidity (but not pouring rain!).

This month's beginner's note is on the subject of water supply. I went to all of the trouble of giving my colonies a shallow trough filled with pebbles, which they use. I also noticed they go to an old open topped drum behind the fruit cage in the garden that is full of old junk and the water looks less than clean. They also visit my neighbour's pond. Such is the fickle nature of our bees! Empty any open container of water or cover as bees drown easily in these. I will not mention other unmentionable places that the bees visit for water, but I suppose that it all adds trace elements to the honey!

Feedback from the spring convention indicated that the suppliers sold out of equipment very quickly, and bargains that were to be had sold like hot cakes as usual.

Please note that it is worth looking at a number of suppliers for the best value. I always buy seconds quality frames and wait until there is a sale (Thornes in January) and the bees don't mind! I always have a supply of Thornes both deep and shallow National wax and frame nails at below list price. Greatly reduced Commercial foundation! Let me know of your needs.

**Fragile Planet Discount code: 2010-BB11 – this is worth a 10% discount.**

**MAY MEETING**

**Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>: Subject: Swarming how to cope with and what to look for.  
Meeting at the apiary of Terry Trott, (Medway member) in Bapchild (east of Sittingbourne).**

From Canterbury the A2 via Faversham to Bapchild. From London the M2 to junction 5 (A249), Sittingbourne, the A2 East to Bapchild, 1 mile on the Faversham side of Sittingbourne. School Lane is opposite the Fox & Goose pub. The Studio is behind the church just at the left hand bend in the road. There is limited parking at the Studio, so you might have to park on the road. ME9 9NL for those with SAT NAV!

NB. If you have surplus equipment for sale, please contact me and I will advertise it in the Newsletter. Please send any copy by Monday of the last week in the month if you wish it to be included in the next Newsletter. **Swarms: If you are a paid up member you will have priority to receive swarms when they come. I already have a list of those wishing to receive swarms (David).**

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