

## KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

### Orpington Branch Newsletter January 2010

Not much to report this time. Pride of place must go to the Winter Convention which to me seemed the best for some years. There was a good turnout augmented by Nick Withers, and Godfrey Munro and his wife Julia. It was nice to see some of our newer members there as well. Needless to say the food and drink was plentiful and excellent and this time a number of people contributed to the entertainment after we had eaten. The success of the event owes much to everyone who helps and particular thanks are due to all those who provided food and drink. It was nice to see Shirley again after missing her last year because of her illness. We all need to thank Mandy and Martin for making their home available to us and doing all the cleaning up afterwards.

I have started to read a book entitled "A World without Bees" which is interesting but maybe a bit repetitive. It is mainly concerned with Colony Collapse Disorder and the theories being advanced for its cause. It points out that there have been many times in the past when bees have died in large numbers. In this country there was the so-called Isle of Wight disease at the beginning of the 20th century. I don't think it was ever positively identified but eventually it died out probably because some bees became immune to it. Scientists in many countries are investigating CCD but without success so far and I wonder whether it also will vanish from the scene in due course without identification. A report by Buglife has identified neocortinoid insecticides as a likely cause of all the bee deaths but this has been refuted by FERA (which was Defra I believe), but it admits that the testing may not have been adequate. FERA are also publishing a newsletter about the Healthy Bees Plan and there are opportunities to train the trainers i.e. beekeepers teaching novice beekeepers; the outcome is a C&G award on preparing to teach.

An interesting analysis by John Hendrie of the financial reports of the member branches shows that 90% of our members contribute to Gift Aid. We can welcome another new member - John Smith - who already has two hives.

Those of you with a computer will have been able to admire another of Tony's skills - this time as a gardener. There were pictures of him planting a tree before an admiring crowd, but they didn't show him digging the hole which is the hardest part.

There is usually a working party in the middle of January at the Apiary but I have not heard anything about it this year. Jim does remind me however that at some time later we will have to construct an archway for the new demonstration hive and this will involve laying down a hardcore base.

Bromley hold their first winter meeting on Tuesday January 19th when Ian Currie will talk about weather. This could be a repeat of one he gave in 2005 which I found to be packed full of information about historical weather extremes and of the variations in climate through the area. I will be interested to hear what he thinks about global warming about which I have severe doubts.

At the convention I tried to remember a story that I had found on an email but failed and produced a rather garbled version. Since I rather like it, here it is:

A man was very unhappy with his wife for whom there would be a big insurance payout if she died. He thought it would be a good idea if someone murdered her and so went down to the pub to ask if anyone knew someone who would do it. After a bit he discovered that a man known as Arti might be prepared. So he went to see Arti who agreed to do it for £5000. The man said that he had not got so much money but there would be plenty afterwards. Arti asked "Well how much have you got" and the man fished in his pocket and gave Arti £1. Grudgingly Arti said he would do it. So he followed the wife to the supermarket and strangled her. Unfortunately another lady saw what he had done so he strangled her as well. The headlines on the paper next day read:

At Tesco  
Arti chokes 2 for £1

Frank