

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER
Orpington Branch

As the active beekeeping season draws to a close, I would mention a good article in October's Bee Craft on P.21 for all new beekeepers. It contains clear instructions for readying the hive for winter, and addresses a problem that I have encountered this week of a lot of condensation in the hive, which I didn't have last year. I will be trying out the matchsticks and hope that solves the problem.

Welcome to our newest member of the group, Clive Hilton – we look forward to meeting you at the apiary next season.

Bromley and Orpington Honey Show.

I had my first taste of a honey show, quite literally, on 15th September. Never having been to one before, I decided I would enter my honey and also offer my services to the show for the day. Once I had stuck the class labels and entry numbers on my jars and placed them on the staging, I had difficulty remembering which jar was actually mine as the rules stipulate that all jars and lids are identical. Later on in the morning I was asked if I would like to be the honey judge's steward and record all the results. After the first class was judged, I realized that I didn't have a hope and had not been aware of the all points that the judge would be looking for. I couldn't believe that some of the lids did not even come off the jars for the simple reason that the jar was not full enough, or he had detected some slight granulation. It turned out to be a fascinating experience and I learned a lot. Orpington did well with Jim Grierson, Kit Erhardt and Anne Blackburn winning classes. Anne will have to clear her mantelpiece as she won 3 trophies: The Orpington Cup, The Dr. Courtney Lord Challenge Cup and The Trenear Trophy. A special well done goes to Laila Brook-Martinez who at the grand age of 7 won the Junior Class with her clear honey.

Don't forget that the 81st National Honey Show takes place in Weybridge, Surrey 25th to 27th October.

May I remind you all that if you haven't done so already, please send your KBKA renewal form and remittance back to Richard Brook by 10th October, and if you have decided that you would like to receive Bee Craft electronically, please deduct £7 from your total and tick the correct box.

Dates for your diary.

The Orpington Branch AGM will take place at Atomwide on Wednesday 7th November, this will be followed by our traditional Harvest supper and a chance to catch up with everyone.

Nicky Gammins is organizing another quiz lunch in Ashford on the 25th November with proceeds going to her work with the short-haired Bumble bees. Orpington put in a team last year and enjoyed the outing. If you would like to go along and stretch your 'grey matter' contact Jim Grierson. Cost is £5 and includes a ploughman's lunch.

And finally, it has been an incredibly 'swarmy' year which has kept our swarm collectors extremely busy. However, Hans Migo didn't need help to retrieve his wandering bees. They decided that the straw hat on the neighbouring allotment was better than their hive!

