

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2014
Kent Beekeepers' Association – Orpington Branch

I was going to start off by saying what a relief it has been not to battle against the snow this winter, however I was informed this morning that Aberdeen has had considerable snowfall overnight, so it could be that we see the white stuff this week. I think we have all had enough of the wet weather and high winds. The water table is the highest it has been for 20 years, so those with out-apiaries ought to check that their hives are not standing in mini lakes.

Thanks to Richard Brook and Jim Grierson for visiting our apiaries and gardens to treat the hives with oxalic acid. They reported back that the mild winter has paid off and only one colony was found to have died – which is much better than last year.

A good number of us met up in January at Atomwide to discuss the High Elms apiary and how we should proceed this year. Thank you to everyone for your input, we also watched the film 'More than Honey'.

What's coming up for Orpington beekeepers before the active season gets going – read on

26th February - Talk by Clive de Bruyn: Swarm prevention and management.
at Atomwide, Sevenoaks Way, Orpington. 7.30 for 8pm, cost £3.00
Refreshments

8th and 15th March - First Aid Course for Beekeepers
9am-12.15pm at Crofton Baptist Church, Orpington. Cost £30 including refreshments and First Aid Book. This course comes highly recommended and I will recirculate the email giving course details again. Places are still available so get in touch and book your place.

26th March – Talk by John Williams: Small scale queen rearing
at Atomwide, Sevenoaks Way, Orpington, 7.30 for 8pm Refreshments

I have just had a look at the Bromley branch website and they have organized the following talks for their winter season. All beekeepers are welcome to attend but with a word of warning that their HQ is quite difficult to find. They have an apiary and clubhouse on allotments at the following address: Kent House Road Leisure Gardens, 91a Kent House Rd, Sydenham SE26 5LJ. The entrance is opposite Woodbastick Road, which is where I tend to park when I go.

18th February – Talk by Dr. Stefan Wolf. Talk begins at 7.30pm
He will be talking about his work which involves putting tiny radar antennae on honey bees to track where they go.

18th March – Talk by David Rudland. Talk begins at 7.30pm
David lives locally and has 150 hives, he is also a seasonal inspector.

15th March – Talk by Bob Maurer. Talk begins at 7.30pm
Anatomy of a honey bee.

British Beekeepers Association Spring Convention. 4-6th April 2014.
Ann Blackburn has attended on at least 3 occasions. If you can't decide whether to go or not, read what she says about this event:

The Spring Convention is held at Harper Adams University, Newport in Shropshire. I've been to three Conventions and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Having recently started beekeeping, I have found it to be a steep learning curve and the three day event provided an intensive introduction to the many fascinating facets of beekeeping. There are the usual lectures, demonstrations and workshops, including courses on microscopy and queen rearing. In case of over-exposure to bees and beekeeping, there are opportunities to learn about honey cookery, patchwork and quilting, joining a nature and photographic walk and even making cosmetics with honey and beeswax. There's something for everyone - from beginners to experienced beekeepers, as well as the chance to chat with friendly fellow beekeepers from all over the country.

Some reminders for us all

Check that your colonies have enough food to get them through the next lean 6 weeks. If they are running low then give them some candy/fondant.

Check equipment, clean and repair as necessary ready for the upcoming active beekeeping season.

Empty hives? Contact Richard Brook or Tony Trinick and put your name on the swarm list.