

KENT BEEKEEPERS` ASSOCIATION

Orpington Branch Newsletter August 2004

The time is fast approaching when you should be putting Apistan or Bayvarol strips into your hives hopefully to kill a lot of varroa. I will again try to order a bulk supply; if you haven't already let me know your requirements, please do so as soon as possible. I will close the order book on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Having put the strips in, you will need to monitor the varroa mortality. If you don't find any dead ones then you are lucky to have a varroa-free colony (unlikely) or you have pyrethroid-resistant varroa. In this case you had better get in touch with the bee disease inspector.

The hall at the honey show next month will also include a craft fair, so if any of you know of someone who might like to exhibit their wares, could you please ask them to ring Peter Bashford, the organiser, on 020 8656 7990.

Ray Meurer has finally given up the hope of looking after bees and at the same time her family. As a result she wants to sell her hives, preferably to someone who is just about to start. The hives are Jumbo Langstroth, five in number and without bees. I don't know what other equipment is available too. Having had that kind of hive myself, I would prefer it to the WBC or National hives more often used. If you are interested, please ring Ray on 020 8467 6571

If you sometimes wonder, when you extract your honey, whether it is going to ferment after it sets, then a check of its refractive index would set your mind at rest. To do this, you need a refractometer and a firm called Bellingham & Stanley Ltd. are making a special offer to beekeepers of one covering water content from 10-30% for a special price of £99 +VAT. If you would like more information, please ring them on 01892 500400.

The arrangement for subscriptions has been changed and there will now be no half-year subscription. In addition we will be hoping to get in all subscriptions in good time so that we know how many copies of "BeeCraft" to pay for. So you will be receiving the forms soon, possibly with this newsletter. To make life easy for our treasurer, please complete and return them as soon as possible.

I did not manage to get to the Kent Show this year, but the list of beekeeping successes at the show does not include any Orpington members – a great pity.

An article in the "Sunday Telegraph" reported that a German zoologist had found that "Bees are not as busy as they are made out to be. In fact the insects are lazy, work-shy and prone to sleeping on the job. Bees sleep for 80% of the night and like to spend long periods 'resting their wings'". So if you find the bees a bit angry when you open the hive, it may be because you have just woken them up!

Another newspaper report referred to an article in the journal 'Science' in which workers at the University of Sydney, Australia, found that the genetic make-up of worker bees results in a variation of the temperature at which they fan their wings to cool the hive. So some bees start fanning at a low temperature and are joined by more bees as the temperature rises. As with a mechanical thermostat, this gives better temperature control than a simple on/off device. Once again, one is amazed at the cleverness packed in to that tiny body.

Here are some photographs sent to me by Keith Snellin.

Frank

