

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Orpington Branch Newsletter August 2007

Last month's issue was mainly devoted to the treatment of varroa and stressed the importance of carrying out counts to find out the severity of the infestation. Kit thinks that many beekeepers may be put off doing this because they don't know how to do it. So, on Saturday August 4th at the Apiary, he and Jim will be showing two methods. This is so important for everyone that I hope most of you with bees will be able to come.

Congratulations to Dennis and Helen Blakeley for their successes at the Kent Show. Their awards were Seconds for their Sweet Mead and Honey Marmalade, Highly Commended for the Novice Set Honey and Commended for the Honey Biscuits. Their granddaughter won a Second for a painting of a bee on a flower. It is very nice to be able to report that members have entered the show.

What about this for a contrast in fortune? Neil had just gone on holiday when he heard that vandals had broken into his site at the hospital and tipped over his hive. He had only had the bees for a couple of weeks. The vandals had also been in the hospital turning on gas taps and doing other damage. The site is very well protected and is covered by CCTV cameras, so with a bit of luck the culprits will be able to be identified. Jim went along and restored the hives – fortunately they had stayed together in one piece - but the bees were very angry and followed him all the way to his car. Hopefully they did the same to the vandals.

According to Jim there was a smaller attendance than last year at the Hop Shop because of the changed weekend but a similar amount of interest from the public to the show at Mottingham a week or so before. Whether we repeat it in future years depends a bit on support, since it does take up two days.

We are having a stand at the Country Fair Day at High Elms on Sunday September 2nd so help will be needed. It is rather nice to have a show on our own doorstep.

Later that month, the Honey Show at the usual place will be held on the 15th. Please try to put in some entries or it may finish up as the Bromley Honey Show.

The National Honey Show at Hendon is on 18-20th October and as usual the organization is offering free entry to the show and attendance at lectures to new members of the KBKA. In addition, all first-time exhibitors and those who have not exhibited in the last ten years are not required to pay entry fees for the first four classes entered in this year's show. I have informed the secretary of the name of our new member.

The latest edition of BeeMail reports that the Spanish are asking for the EU ban on the import of Chinese honey to be reinstated because of a dramatic increase in instances of antibiotic residue found. Cheap imports apparently account for up to 80% of Spain's consumption and threaten the livelihood of Spanish beekeepers. Also included are reports of a swarm of bees landing on a beach at Bournemouth (consternation amongst bathers) and another being sucked into an aircraft engine soon after take off making it necessary for the plane to land again (rather expensive).

Shirley keeps me in touch with what is going on in Downe and the latest news is that the Government's Department for Culture Media and Sport has formally withdrawn the nomination of Darwin at Downe as a World Heritage Site. In a report, the outstanding universal value, authenticity and integrity of the site were questioned. The Culture Minister David Lammy looks forward to submitting a revised bid in 2009. I wonder what you think? I don't think I would get any benefit from the WHS status and I expect the residents of Downe are not too disappointed by the news. Are there any implications for the Nature Centre at High Elms? Maybe the Council will decide they don't need a new building now.

A bit far ahead, but Essex Beekeepers are holding a one-day conference on "Bees are Good for Human Health" on Saturday November 3rd from 9.30am to 4.30pm. Speakers are Prof. Robert Pickard on "Bees, Humans and Health", Pam Hunter on "Is Natural Always Good" and James Fearnley on "Propolis:Future Medicine". Tickets are £19 (£18 before September 16th) and include buffet lunch and refreshments. Go to www.ebka.org or contact Pat Allen, Secretary, 8 Frank's Cottages, St. Mary's Lane, Upminster RM14 3NU.

Frank