

## KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

### Orpington Branch Newsletter June 2006

Once again wet weather was a feature of the May Fair at Petts Wood although there were some bright intervals. The attendance was much reduced and we did well to sell quite a bit of our honey. Disappointingly the number of stands was again down.

Even worse weather greeted our first demonstration on the Coolings Nature Trail and it was surprising that anyone tried to find our site. Nevertheless, about ten people braved it and during a break in the weather most were kitted up, were led to the hives and were introduced to beekeeping. No one was stung and many described the experience as fascinating. It is probable that one of them will become a member so it was very worthwhile. Hopefully we will be able to repeat the exercise next year, but we need to get more publicity for it, especially a poster near the entrance to the shop. Many thanks to Gordon for opening up his hive when the bees would much have preferred to stay in the warm. Also to Jim for raiding his bees so that we could have the observation hive to show visitors.

Our next activity is the Apiary Club AGM at the Apiary on Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2.30pm. This is an important meeting during which it we hope to finalize the rules. Please turn up if you can.

Following that, we will be back at Coolings in Rushmore Hill on Saturday-Sunday June 10-11<sup>th</sup>. Again, help is needed for setting up and answering questions during both days. Gordon now seems to have taken on the role of stand organizer so please let him know if you can participate.

We are having a stand at Hadlow College, Mottingham on Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup>. I don't have any details of that but again Gordon is likely to be the person who does.

The Kent County Show is on Friday-Sunday July 14-16<sup>th</sup> and I hope some of you will be able to enter. The closing date for entries is Friday July 7<sup>th</sup>. Stewards for the show are urgently required so please try to assist if you can. It isn't arduous and you get into the show free. If you are interested, I can let you have the appropriate form.

An article in the "Daily Telegraph" caught my attention because the heading was "Beekeepers say mite could hit fruit supply". The reason for the worry is that varroa are becoming resistant to Bayvarol and Apistan –both pyrethroids. "Beekeepers in the South-East are predicting that 2006 will be the worst year for their colonies in living memory. Fred Willis of Lowestoft, Suffolk, said 'I used to have 55 colonies. Now it's down to 35 and I'm losing more every day. All across East Anglia populations are down by as much as 50 per cent'". That this was bound to happen eventually has been known for years, yet I hadn't heard of this sudden deterioration. I haven't seen it mentioned in "Beecraft". Is it real or something hyped by the paper? To be safe, we should all be testing our colonies to find out whether the protection afforded by pyrethroids is still working or a thing of the past, or we may find our bees dying. If you don't know how to do it I have a leaflet giving details.

A letter from a reader a few days later pointed out that a team at Rothamsted had been working on a fungal treatment for varroa for years but had now dispersed because of a lack of funding. It is so depressing.

Frank