

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Orpington Branch Newsletter November 2006

Another beekeeping year has started and I hope you have all paid your subs. The National Honey Show has taken place and Jim and Gordon both report that there has been a further decline since last year with fewer people about and the Thorne's stand reduced to only about half its previous size. So it looks as though this is a general trend and not just something happening at our show. Jim says that the show next year is to be for two days only, a 33% reduction. I am sure that one factor is the location of the show at the RAF Museum. It seems very difficult to get to, even for us living reasonably close to London. It must be worse for those farther away. Kensington was the best but it was too expensive.

Gordon found something to interest him at the show. A gentleman named Richard Alabone was showing a prototype of a device to make it easy to remove supers when you need to get into the brood box. As far as I can make out, you need a rigid stand with the hive and supers at one end and another brood box at the other end. There appears to be a trolley (which might include the queen excluder) and this travels on rails fitted at the back and front of the two brood boxes. There may be some levers which lift the trolley slightly and then you can roll the supers along to be over the other brood box. As written, this seems rather complicated and probably expensive, but Gordon was quite enthusiastic so I expect I have misunderstood how it works. It will probably be on show again next year at the Spring Convention. In the meantime contact Gordon for a more informed account.

The Apple Day at High Elms was not quite a washout in spite of relentless rain all day. However a surprisingly large number of visitors did brave the weather and Peter and Jim sold quite a bit of honey. As far as I can make out, the building of the new Nature Centre has not yet started and there are now only about ten weeks until the date when it was due to be finished.

The KBKA Autumn Lecture is on Saturday November 11th at West Kent College, Tonbridge at 3.00pm with doors open at 2.00. The speaker is Ivor Davis, the Chairman of the BBKA and his subject "Beekeeping Challenges for the Future". This includes the position of beekeepers in relation to the government and its agencies, the management of varroa and future issues including diseases, management methods and the short-term effects of a warmer country. This will be followed by a forum session where you can pose your own questions. We are very fortunate in having the opportunity to hear from such an informed source and only for £2 in advance or at the door.

As an example of the changed climate the wasps from a nest in the roof of my house were very active this morning – the end of October and a cold grey day.

A reminder to Committee members - the next meeting is on Tuesday November 7th at 8.00pm at Kit's house. This is a change from the original date.

Our next activity is the AGM and Harvest Supper on Wednesday November 22nd at 8.00pm at the Petts Wood Memorial Hall. This is an important meeting to which the Committee hopes you will all come.

After that will be the Christmas Party on December 16th but I will give you more details next time.

Keen readers of the latest edition of "Beecraft" will have noticed in the list of successful candidates for the Basic Certificate the name DW Blakeley who is, of course, our Dennis. Many Congratulations Dennis - I'm sure your bees will appreciate it.

Overleaf I have printed some reminders of a memorable warm, sunny day. If you would like a 6x4 print of any of them, please let me know. They are numbered for identification.

Frank