



KENT BEE-KEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

County Newsletter No. 87 September 2017

EDITORIAL

I've yet to live through a season that wasn't unusual and this season has been no exception. In my patch of suburbia the most noticeable oddity was the flowering of the brambles – a key forage crop of neglected gardens and railway embankments. In previous years, the brambles have coincided with the main honey flow, from the end of June to mid July, when colonies are, with luck, judgement and considerable effort, all strong and queen-right.

This year, the brambles flowered about a month early. Some of my neighbours did very well in terms of honey. But my bees, on the other hand, late-swarmer to a hive, were still in bits and so ate the stuff as quickly as it came in. I've now got some nice strong colonies, but only three capped frames to show for it.

Another oddity was three swarms that fell to earth. It's not unusual to find swarms clustering on or near the ground if queens are clipped, as they don't travel very far, but I saw three this year that were nowhere near hives and where the queens were dead, presumably having died in flight. Why this should have happened, I don't know. Starvation or disease seem likely, but it reminded me of something that happened in May.

In May, I went to mark a new queen that one of my hives had produced. Unusually, I found her soon enough, and both she and her brood pattern looked robust and healthy. I picked her up and rummaged in my pocket for the marking pen. And while I was doing that, a worker bee flew down and stung her. I dropped the pen, brushed away the worker and the new queen ran back down. I expected she'd be 'balled', but the hive bees treated her well, so I closed up and hoped for the best, imagining the stinging worker had been, perhaps, a confused robber.

A couple of weeks later, I looked again. The hive was as full of brood, including eggs, as anyone could want, and again I found the queen, healthy and untroubled. Again, I picked her up to mark her and, before I'd even started rummaging, a worker flew down and tried to sting her. Again I closed up. I've not seen that queen again, but the hive seems strong and healthy and shows all the signs of being queen-right, so I've not risked trying to find her. I've not seen, or read of, anything similar happening before. But the same goes for the swarms with dead queens, and I can't help wondering if there's a connection.

I don't know the reason for either of these, so if any wiser, or better-read, members know any different, I'd be delighted to hear from them.

Kent Beekeepers Honey Show at the Kent County Show

Report by **John F Chapman**



Live Bee Demonstration at Kent County Show 2017

This year the Kent Beekeepers moved from our usual position at the show, next to the bee pavilion, into the Flower Tent. This means that we joined the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies, NAFAS, Floral Art and the Plant Nursery displays. As the exhibits in the tent now cover the whole story of vegetable and flower production, including the role of bees in pollination, the Flower Tent has been renamed "Garden Life".

At the suggestion of the Beekeepers Show Committee, the showground staff built a new path leading from the car parks through the woodland to the back of the Garden Life tent. The public now comes from the woodland area past the Live Bee Demonstration Area and so to the Bees before the other exhibits in the tent and the rest of the showground.

This experiment has worked extremely well for us as the footfall through the tent has greatly increased. The show has claimed over 80,000 were in attendance, and the Live Bee Demonstrations were very well attended, as were the stalls in the tent,

helped along by helpful announcements made in the tent. The shop did very well from the Friday onwards and at times we were not sure if we would have enough honey and wax products to sell. Thanks to all those who arranged to get extra supplies to the shop.

The Honey Show was smaller than 2 years ago, but created much interest and prompted many questions from our visitors. We would like more entries for next year, so please think about entering especially if you have success at your own local show. Our Judge, Mike Duffin, who is a National Honey Show Judge, was impressed with the overall quality of the exhibits.

The winners of the Cups and Trophies were: -

Agricultural Societies Trophy (for the Exhibitor with the highest points in classes)	Paul F Abbott (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)
Clive Watson Memorial Trophy (Winner of Class 2 for Medium Honey)	Mrs. Leslie Fancote (Gravesend)
Robert Geering Challenge Cup for Mead	Paul F Abbott (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)
Reginald Tower Rose Bowl (best exhibit in candles)	Mark Woollard (Whitstable and Herne Bay)
Subscribers Cup (Winner of Exhibition Class)	John Chapman (Medway)
Novice Cup (open to any exhibitor who has not won a first place card in the Kent Honey Show)	Anthony Edwards (Medway)
Geoffrey Dixon Trophy (honey from a Branch or Association Apiary)	Medway Beekeepers Association
Best Honey Exhibit in Show (Certificate of Merit)	John Chapman (Medway)
Margaret Calder Plate (Best Exhibit in Cookery Classes)	Paul F Abbott (Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)
Central Division Cup (Branch or Association Winning the Most Points in classes 1-15)	Medway Beekeepers Association



Lesley Fancote gets her award from Kent County Show director John Coultrip

Thanks must go to all the show committee, who supported the move into the new area. And to all of you that helped to steward the stands, demonstrated, helped to set-up and dismantle the bee areas or helped in any way to make this show a really great success. We know that some things this year did not go quite as planned, but this was a major move for us. We are now keen to build on this experience for the future.

NATIONAL BEE UNIT NEWS

The National Bee Unit has issued some guidance on [Autumn Managment](#) for any beekeepers tempted to take a rest, compiling a useful list of all the merry checks and chores we should be getting up to. Alongside advice on helping queens we hope to breed from survive the winter, they have reminders about disease inspections, treatment and feeding.

COUNTY AND OTHER EVENTS

BROMLEY & ORPINGTON HONEY SHOW

10am-4.30pm Saturday 16th September 2017

(staging from 9.00-9.45am)

Emmanuel Church, The Grove, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 9JS

EAST KENT PLOUGHING MATCH

(Canterbury branch in attendance)

9am – 4pm Wednesday 27th September

Quex Park, Manston Road, Birchington CT7 0HR

WEALD HONEY SHOW

3pm 30th Saturday September 2017

Vestry Hall, Cranbrook TN17 3HA, UK

86TH NATIONAL HONEY SHOW SANDOWN PARK

26th 27th and 28th October 2017

Portsmouth Road, Esher KT10 9AJ

For details, including lecture programme, workshop bookings and show schedule, see www.honeyshow.co.uk

BBKA Examination Dates

Saturday 30 September

BBKA Modules

Applications due for November exams

Saturday 11 November

BBKA Module Exams

Seasonal Bee Inspectors

North London	Brian McCallum	07775 119478	brian.mccallum@apha.gsi.gov.uk
South London	Mark Patterson	07900 223241	mark.patterson@apha.gsi.gov.uk
Surrey	Hilary Hayward	07900 167409	hilary.hayward@apha.gsi.gov.uk
North Kent	Kay Wreford	07775 119483	kay.wreford@apha.gsi.gov.uk
East Sussex and South Kent	Michael Cooper	07775 119451	michael.cooper@apha.gsi.gov.uk
West Sussex and East Sussex	Diane Steele	07775 119452	diane.steele@apha.gsi.gov.uk

DON'T FORGET to advise your Branch Secretary and the County Membership Secretary of any change to your e-mail address, postal address or telephone numbers.

If you have any branch information or articles you would like included in the Newsletter, please e-mail newsletter@kbka.org.uk