

# **Bromley Bee News Monthly Update**

## **Published by the Bromley Beekeepers**



**Peter Springall**

Welcome to the **September 2002** issue of Bromley News.

News has reached me that Dave Harris (affectionately known as the Blind Man) is in hospital recovering after a major operation. We all wish Dave a speedy recovery and hope to see him attending branch meetings in his usual greenish bee suit in the near future.

I had a very pleasant time at the Ashford branch barbeque where I was invited to demonstrate in early August. I was pre warned before we moved up to the bees that temper was a problem in the apiary, I wasn't worried as I was wearing my new 'BB wear' full bee suit which gave me confidence to deal with any situation.



The honey had already been taken off and the wets put back on for cleaning. Ashford's branch apiary has National hives on single and double broods. Inspections were very relaxed in fairly windy but sunny conditions. I was asked to mark a queen which I did in a botched way, as well as a spot of paint on her thorax she gained a go faster stripe. The bees were surprisingly pleasant to handle. I treated all hives with Apistan (early in August as recommended by experts) before closing the hives. When you are so engrossed in what you are doing time can fly by, I had spent 2.5 hours looking, talking and answering questions about the bees to some of the five newest members, we had forgotten about the food being cooked on the barbeque and were being beckoned down, it was time to eat.

Some members may be aware of the Internet and how useful it can be for finding information and contacting specialists in different fields!

Well I get a number of e-mails each year relating to bees in walls, lofts, swarms in gardens etc, this is because my details are published on [kentbee.com](http://kentbee.com) as a swarm coordinator in the Catford area. I recently received an e-mail from Simon Wilks who had a bee problem over in Forest Hill.



This was an established colony of honeybees which had been left undisturbed for many years. The bees were coming from a ventilator air brick on the third floor at the top of a block of flats.

I knew that removing such a large colony of bees in August was going to be difficult. I hadn't attempted anything like it before but rose to the challenge for the experience. I contacted Peter Hutton who was able to give me some good advice.

The main tips were take plenty of honey buckets and cover the floors, remove the comb from the back, consider taking a second beekeeper to help.

The combs were in the ceiling in the bathroom between two joists which were conveniently above the bath. I was aware when you start a job like this you never know exactly how the job will pan out. Firstly I cut down the plaster board between the joists exposing all the combs.



I then installed a one way bee valve in front of the air vent so any bees leaving wouldn't be able to return, and would cluster on the outside wall. I had set-up a empty hive on the roof as close to the air vent as possible, this was the lure hive to attract the bees.

I had a spare veil which Simon wore with his anorak so he was the second pair of hands, all the combs where removed which was a very sticky experience, my bee suit was completely soaked in honey covering my glasses, hair and body, there were bees everywhere.

I estimated that I was stung 150 times, pain or no pain, when you start a job it has to be finished.

The original plan was to find the queen and cage her putting her in bait hive, unfortunately the queen was never found during the dismantling of the nest, probably because of my impaired vision.

To cut a long story short Simon is now completely free of his bees and can now have builders erect scaffolding to replace his windows. Simon should be relieved he can use his bathroom again after two weeks of camping out in his own flat.

A number of photographs have been taken and will be available to view at the Bromley and Orpington branch honey show.

You should receive a show schedule with this newsletter; if not copies can be downloaded from the address: <http://www.kentbee.com/bromley/programme.htm> . If you have any queries about the schedule contact Peter Bashford 020-8656-7990. I hope all members and spouses will take the trouble to enter something in this years show. A lot of effort is involved in organising this event, so please support it!

## **Internet News**

### **Improved web version of this newsletter with photographs**

<http://www.kentbee.com/bromley/newsletters/septbbk02.htm>

### **Beedata Members Beekeeping News**

Subscribe to this news service and receive bee news directly to your inbox:

<http://www.beedata.com/membersnews.shtml>

## ***Steven Turner***

### **Apiary News**

Robbing is the next hazard we have to look out for. Now that the flow is over idle hands have nothing better to do than look for trouble. Make sure all your entrances are as small as possible. A half an inch is all that is necessary which will give the residents a chance to guard their precious stores. If you have to feed, do it in the evening and be careful not to spill honey when taking off your harvest, apart from that there is little else you can do.

Show time is here. Make sure you have at least two jars to put in the show and don't forget, if you have never won a prize before you can enter in the novices class, a class which is far less demanding. Don't forget there are classes which would suit your spouse where beekeeping expertise is not necessary. Towards the end of next month it will be time to get your entries in for the National Honey Show. Don't let the time go

by and leave it too late.

The queen rearing is now over, not because it is too late, but because it is difficult to open small stocks which are the ones most susceptible to being robbed out. There are still a couple of queens available from those bred in the Apiary this year. Contact me if you have need to replace any queens that could be suspect. Wishing you all a bumper harvest.

**Photographs from the Bromley Beekeepers tent at the Cudham Show in August by Steven Turner**



**Looking at the bees**



**Tony showing this bees**



**Roll your own candles**

***Peter Springall***

### **Diary Dates**

#### **Sunday 1st September 11.45am**

The branch apiary meeting. Beekeeping demonstrations and hive management. Tea and biscuits provided.

#### **Saturday 14th September - The Bromley and Orpington Honey Show and Beekeeping exhibition.** Opens to the public at 2.30pm **FREE ENTRY.**

Emmanuel Church, The Grove, West Wichham, Kent.

See quality products of the hive; buy pure English honey; things for kids to do; watch the bees at work safely behind glass in the demonstration hive; beekeeping exhibits and more. **Park Beekeeping Supplies** has been invited to demonstrate his cheaper range of honey extractors. Refreshments available.

#### **Sunday 6th October 11.45am**

The branch apiary meeting. Beekeeping demonstrations and hive management. Tea and biscuits provided.

#### **14th-16th November - The National Honey Show** at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, Kensington High Street, London. <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/>

#### **For more information**

Peter Springall 020-8690-3906 Mobile: 07779970104 [E-Mail](#)

Tom Winks Chairman 020-8777-3144

Clive Watson 020-8658-3786

Steven Turner (editor) 020-8698-0313 [E-Mail](#)

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