

# ***KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BRANCH NEWSLETTER***

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See our website: [www.kentbee.com/stw/](http://www.kentbee.com/stw/)

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## **Swarm Request List**

If you would like to add your name to our Swarm Request List for 2018 because you have lost your bees this winter, send your Name, Address, Land Line & Mobile number by email to John Farrow at: [dynesbarn@gmail.com](mailto:dynesbarn@gmail.com) We make a nominal charge between £10 and £20 depending on distance and difficulty involved in collecting the swarm.

Always bear in mind that we cannot guarantee the temperament or the health of a swarm. However, it is reasonable to assume that swarms rarely come with disease as it is generally only the fittest bees that take flight.

*Photo: John Farrow*



## **Learning from Bumblebees**



*Photo: Paul Abbott*

We gained a fascinating insight into the difficulties and rewards of studying bumblebees at our talk in February. Professor Mark Brown, from Royal Holloway, University of London, has been studying bumblebees for twenty years in Switzerland, Ireland and Britain. He was speaking to us about his research into the effect that neonicotinoids have on bees. He explained that it was better to study bumblebees rather than honeybees because bumblebees, along with wild bees are the biggest pollinators in the world; bumblebees are active earlier in the morning and later at night than honeybees; honeybees are social and they can be protected by their numbers whereas after a bumblebee queen has mated she is solitary until she builds up her colony the following season.

The number of species in Britain has been in decline since 1874 when guano was imported as a fertiliser and grassland rotation was reduced. As agriculture has become more intensive, the decline in bumblebee species has increased.

Professor Brown explained that a number of studies had taken place over many years, some with better methodology than others, but each building on the previous findings. In his experiments, where a low dose of a nicotinoid was given to bumblebee colonies it reduced egg-laying by 26%.

*Mary Staffurth*

## **Solitary Bees**

Our final talk before the beekeeping season gets underway will be on Tuesday March 20. Ian Beavis will be our speaker. He will explain the life history of solitary bees, and perhaps help us to identify a few of the commoner ones.

## Kent Bee Health Day

If you have not already booked a place on the Kent Bee Health Day then you may need to act quickly. The original 65 places were booked within 48 hours but the organisers have managed to increase the number of places to 100. The event is being held on **Saturday April 28** in conjunction with the NBU Inspectors Sandra Gray, Kay Wreford, Michael Cooper and Mark Patterson. The venue will be East Malling Village Hall ME19 6DD, from 10-4pm with use of the nearby Mid-Kent BKA apiary. Please visit the website for more details: [www.ksrbees.org.uk](http://www.ksrbees.org.uk)

The organisers say the course will provide these benefits:

- an opportunity to examine combs with EFB, AFB (protective and disinfectant materials will be provided)
- see these relatively rare Notifiable diseases at first hand
- combs will also be available with lesser conditions such as sacbrood, chalkbrood
- in the apiary, learn the techniques employed by inspectors in looking for Notifiable diseases
- see also the techniques used to check colonies for exotic pests, such as Small Hive Beetle and Tropilaelaps
- learn the latest legal situation and current Best Practice in the control of varroa
- see the various varroacides available, discuss their pros and cons
- learn about biotechnical (Husbandry, non-chemical) methods of varroa control
- hear about the current situation in respect of the Asian Hornet, how to detect it and how to report it.
- this is an opportunity to quiz the Bee Inspectors and to network with beekeepers from all over the County

## Diary Dates

### **Saturday March 10 at 2pm at Barrwood**

The meeting we had planned in February to clear and tidy up the site had to be cancelled, so please come prepared for gardening duties. If the weather is fine we will be checking the colonies, so please bring your bee suits as well.

### **Saturday March 17 at 2pm at Hilbert Road**

Preparing for the beekeeping season with Richard Rose. We would still like volunteers to take some of the Hilbert Road apiary meetings, so why not come along and see whether you think you could help at future meetings.

### **Tuesday March 20 Daytime**

Bee Health Check and Microscopy Workshop at the Grosvenor and Hilbert Park Hub in Tunbridge Wells. All the places on the morning session are booked but the event is open to the public from 1pm to 3pm to observe how and why beekeepers use microscopes to assess the health of their bees.

### **Tuesday March 20 at 7.30 pm at Weald Memorial Hall**

Ian Beavis will give a talk about solitary bees.

### **Saturday March 24 at 2pm at Barrwood**

Assessing the hives and their colonies with Cliff Hayward.

*If you have information, an article or a photo for the newsletter please contact Mary Staffurth by email or phone, details at the top of page 1.*