

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

May 2018

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See our website: www.kentbee.com/stw/

Clearing the Way at Hilbert Road

I attended the apiary on April 14th and was helped by Margaret Everest and Suzette Elliot West. We started to clear all the leaves and debris around the site and we also cut down shrubs and unwanted growth. Robin Toop and Peter Hutton joined us and Peter helped us to view the two hives. The first colony was not too strong but had a laying queen in the top box. We examined the second hive, which was very light on stores but had some eggs and larvae. We switched the top half of the hive to the bottom and put a drawn frame with frames of food each side into what is now the top brood box, hoping to entice the queen up to lay.

I hope there are some members who can visit on Saturday May 5th to check up on the bees, if so please ring me on 01892 653863.
Richard Rose

Changing Seasons at Barrwood



Inspecting the Barrwood hives in the cold weather

What a difference a couple of weeks make. On April 7th the weather was hardly suitable for opening the hives but with several new beekeepers eager for some introduction to this strange world, we briefly checked to ensure there was some brood, and there were sufficient stores. We then put together the 14x12 frames and foundation ready to replace the old comb should this winter ever end.

A fortnight later, and after a week of unseasonably warm and sunny weather, the bluebells were in bloom and we were now looking at adding supers as the rape was beginning to flower. The first task, however, was to find and mark the queens before the colonies expanded too much. The 'bionic-eyed beekeeper award' went to Sue, for spotting the first queen from a distance of about a metre. With a large group of nine of us, we split into two. Richard's group found a queenless hive containing a single emergency queen cell but no brood, which suggested the queen was probably raised on old larvae.

Fortunately, the next hive had a frame containing a large number of eggs so some were added to the queenless colony so that they could re-queen themselves.

The last task was to initiate the Bailey comb change on the 14x12. Normally one adds the additional box of foundation above the original hive, but as we only have the one 14x12 box and no suitable sized eke, it was put below on a national brood and a half. It will be interesting to know if this 'variation on a theme' actually works.

The next meeting on May 12th is likely to concentrate on swarm control for the two strong colonies, and moving the bees in our 14x12 to 'hopefully' drawn out fresh comb.

Cliff Hayward

New Beacon Bees

One of our members, Philip Runacres, has taken up the challenge to work with New Beacon School in Sevenoaks, where the staff want to have an apiary so the children can learn about bees. Philip lives close to the school and has been looking for an apiary site near to his home.

Asian Hornet Action Teams

Plans to set up Asian Hornet Action Teams have been written up in Beecraft and elsewhere. The aim is to prevent Asian Hornets becoming established by speeding up the identification and verification process. One of our members, Vanessa Jones, would be happy to be involved in any local initiatives. If anyone is interested please contact Vanessa: [<vanessajones@btinternet.com>](mailto:vanessajones@btinternet.com)

Beekeeper Wanted

If anyone is interested in keeping bees on a site in Paddock Wood we have had the following inquiry: I'm interested in having a bee hive at a site I manage in Paddock Wood. What I'm after ideally is one of your members keeping their bees onsite and looking after them. I have a similar setup at a site in Crawley. Feel free to contact me if you need any further information. Daniel Harratt.
07710939418 daniel.harratt@networkrail.co.uk

Saturday 28th April - Kent Bee Health Day

On a cool and blustery Saturday, a contingent of Sevenoaks members met with colleagues from other Kent Beekeepers Associations in West Malling for an informative and helpful training day. The training was provided by bee inspectors from the National Bee Unit. We had the opportunity to see samples of AFB, EFB and other pests and diseases at first hand. It was worrying to hear that Kent is a hotspot for EFB, so we need to know what to look for and how to respond. We also had talks on Varroa control and identifying the Asian Hornet and Small Hive Beetle. There was also an opportunity to watch the bee inspectors undertaking a colony inspection, demonstrating their particular areas of concern.

We learned several important lessons:-

1. Some of the diseases are difficult to identify visually, so please err on the side of caution, and if you have any suspicions, please get advice quickly. No-one will criticise you for a false alarm.
2. Please register with BeeBase on www.nationalbeeunit.com. This provides a lot of really helpful advice, and in the event of an outbreak of disease, alerts will be issued. There is also a link to the Veterinary Medicine Database, where you can check on the current approved varroa treatments.
3. Bio-security is essential. Use a strong solution of washing soda to clean your tools between inspections, and make sure your gloves are cleaned at every inspection. You must be particularly careful if you are visiting an apiary other than your own. Your boots and beesuit should also be regularly cleaned. Hive parts should also be carefully cleaned before use.
4. There are new regulations about the use of veterinary medicines. We all now need to keep a written record for 5 years of the treatments we give to the bees (this does not include routine feeding). You need to record the name of the product and the supplier, date purchased, batch number and quantity. You also need to record the date of administration, identification of treated hive, duration of treatment, withdrawal period, name of person giving the treatment, quantity used and date/method of disposal if not administered.
5. If you are buying a nucleus colony, Queen or hive products online or from any other unknown supplier, please be scrupulous about provenance. If you are not sure, don't.

Liz Birchenough

Honey on the website

Would you like to sell your honey through our website? It would involve using your email address for people to contact you and your location would be either Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells. We get the occasional enquiry for local honey. Previously I have sold mine if they live nearby, though I do have someone near Croydon who buys 10 jars in one go to last him the year! Do not fear that you will be inundated because in the four years I have had my name on the 'beedata' site I have had very few enquirers.

John Farrow

The Swarming Season



This is my first swarm of 2018 collected in 27 C sunshine.

It was down a long drive to a six-bedroom property in Horton Kirby.

It was not a large swarm and will not even fill a nucleus but, hey ho, the season has started.

John Farrow

Visit to Richard Rose's Apiary

On Saturday May 19th Richard Rose is hosting a club visit at his home apiary at Win-Gara, Southview Road, Crowborough TN6 1HF.

Please let him know if you plan to attend:
Email: buzz.richard@uwclub.net
Tel: 01892 653863

Directions: From Crowborough go towards Uckfield for one mile; turn left on Southview Road (a sign at the junction points to the hospital); continue for about 400 yards; on the left is a driveway with a centre island and a green board with WIN-GARA and other names below; continue up drive, bear right at the top. The entrance to the drive is opposite Lordswell Lane.

Equipment Donation

Thanks very much to Stephanie McMahon who is reluctantly giving up beekeeping and has decided to give her bees and all her equipment to the club apiaries. She says she is happy to make the donation in recognition of all the help and friendship she has had from so many beekeepers over the past six years.

Diary Dates

Saturday May 5 at 2pm: Hilbert Road Apiary meeting.

Saturday May 12 at 2pm: Barrwood Apiary meeting with John Farrow and Sarah Rapley.

Saturday May 19 at 2pm: Richard Rose hosts a meeting at his apiary in Crowborough.

Sunday May 20 10.30am to 4.30pm: The Yalding branch of KBKA is holding an event to celebrate World Bee Day at The Gardens, Benover Road, ME18 6EX. Entry is free.

Saturday May 26 at 2pm: Barrwood Apiary meeting.

June 7th, 8th and 9th: The 2018 South of England Show at Ardingly.