

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION
SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS
BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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Website Woes

Our website has suddenly been closed down for technical reasons. We are now having to start from scratch again to build a new website. This may take some time so please bear with us as this was not of our choosing, especially as it has occurred at the height of the beekeeping season. If you try to go on to the Sevenoaks website you will be directed to: www.kbka.org.uk

John Farrow & Sarah Rapley

Queen Rearing

This year I attended the queen rearing course held by the Sidcup branch of the Beekeepers' Association at their Ruxley apiary. The event is run by Rudy Repka, who is an extremely knowledgeable beekeeper and an excellent instructor. The course started in mid-May and ran over five weeks with six sessions in total. Rudy had done a certain amount of work in advance to prepare the colonies. After the distribution of written notes and a slide presentation outlining the process we practised grafting young larvae. This required some manual dexterity and good eyesight or, in my case, reading glasses. After checking the number of grafts accepted we prepared Nuc boxes and then split the cell builder colony into these, making sure that each had a single sealed queen cell. Then it was just a case of waiting to see if the virgin queens would emerge, manage to mate successfully and start laying.

It was also very interesting to see how another branch managed their apiary. There was extensive use of Demaree swarm control, and with twelve brood frames per box the colonies were well populated and building up stores well. I would highly recommend this course to anyone who has an interest in raising their own queens but who has not yet managed to do so.

Garry Muskett

Front Seat Ride for Bees

When Sarah Rapley turned up to collect a swarm in Weald early in May she had no room in the boot for the skep. She drove home in her bee gear with the skep on the front seat.

Her exploits made it into the columns of the Sevenoaks Chronicle with the Weald village correspondent describing how a group of villagers watched mesmerised as the "bee lady" collected the swarm and drove off with the colony on the passenger seat. Click on the link to see the story.

<http://mysevenoakscommunity.com/bees-get-a-ride-in-the-front-seat-of-a-car-after-swarm-lands-in-weald-village/>



Expanding Colonies at Barrwood

June 9: At the first June meeting the new queen in a hive that had been split was found and marked in a lovely shade of pink! There was one heavy super with two supers still to be filled. The Nucleus Hive with the old queen was overflowing with bees so we transferred them to a brood box and one super positioned on the same site.

Another of the colonies had a very large number of bees but no signs of an active laying queen. We shook all the bees from the old frames and reversed the brood boxes so that the old frames were now on the top. We then took a frame of eggs from another hive to hopefully re-queen the colony.

Sarah Rapley & John Farrow

June 23: The new queen that had been raised following swarm control, is now heading our strongest colony (Hive 8) with one super full and another couple being filled. The inspection revealed that the queen has room to lay and plenty of space for incoming nectar. We moved a few super frames around to encourage the outer frames to be filled completely. The nucleus containing the old queen from this hive had already been expanded into a full hive and is continuing to grow, and filling the super.

The hive that was requeened earlier in the year has now settled down and the queen is laying well. The other queenless hive that was given eggs at the last meeting now has a large, well-formed capped queen cell, and the few other queen cells were removed. This is how beekeeping should be. The bees doing what we expect and want of them.

Having shaken the bees into the new drawn comb in the 14x12 hive, the colony has rapidly expanded: a lesson in how well queens lay on new wax. We need not have worried that this new wax was filled with honey as the bees had rapidly moved this above the queen excluder to give the queen room to lay. Unfortunately, the old comb that had been put on the top for all the brood to hatch out is now filled with honey. Hopefully placing this above a crown board will encourage the bees to move it back down into the supers. It will be of interest next year to compare how this colony on its larger brood box compares with the other colonies on nationals.

Cliff Hayward



For Sale

Stainless steel manual two framed honey extractor

Excellent condition
£70 but offers considered

Please contact Sue Smith
01732 810138
sjssmith@btinternet.com

Club Apiary Meetings

July 7 at Barrwood at 2pm
July 14 at Hilbert Road at 2pm
July 21 at Barrwood at 2pm
July 28 at Hilbert Road at 2pm

Cliff Hayward writes: The next few July meetings at Barrwood will concentrate on giving the colonies a thorough health check, which I am sure will be instructive for many members.

Send any photos or articles for inclusion in the newsletter to Mary Staffurth: marystaffurth@yahoo.com