

SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

July 2019

Editor: Mary Staffurth

Tel: 01732 462931 or e-mail: marystaffurth@yahoo.com

Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>



Visit to Belinda's Apiary

There was a good turnout for the meeting at the apiary of one of our members, Belinda Thorkildsen-Canty, in Stone Street in June. Her hives are spread around the garden in a lovely setting.

John Hendrie led the meeting, taking us through several hives as rain threatened. One colony had been brought to the apiary after being donated by another beekeeper. John quickly discovered that the bees were not happy and there appeared to be no queen. He transferred in frames with eggs and brood from another of Belinda's hives, where the colony was very large and there were several queen cells. This will hopefully have benefitted both hives.

We finished with some excellent home-made cake and tea.

Mary Staffurth



Top picture: John smokes a colony before inspecting.

Bottom picture: A marked queen on a frame of brood.

Photos by John Farrow.

The Trials of Queen Rearing at Barrwood

For the first part of the season the weather seemed to be decidedly chilly on the days of our Barrwood meetings. So, inspections were reasonably quick affairs to establish whether there was room, whether an extra super was needed, or if there were swarm preparations.

Queen rearing is most successful in May. Unfortunately, the queen that I had hoped could be used in our donor colony, that is, our most docile queen, swarmed early. Rather than use less ideal queens, or queens that we have not been able to assess as donors, I took a frame of eggs from my home apiary. Kept warm in an insulated bag with a hot water bottle they were transferred to Barrwood to start our queen rearing on May 11.

The eggs were on a frame, cut into three V shapes, referred to as the Miller method. Ideally, one day old larvae are used as they tend to be accepted better, but due to timings, we cut back to the older three-day-old eggs. These were placed in a queenless colony.

Inspection a week later should have seen numerous queen cells, ideally evenly spaced out so that they could be transferred to individual nuc boxes. Unfortunately, no cells were produced. Presumably, due to the delay between taking the eggs from home and demonstrating the process at Barrwood, the eggs had lost viability.

Despite the outcome, the process of carrying out the procedure, and showing how straightforward it can be, will hopefully have encouraged everyone present to have a go themselves. |

Cliff Hayward

Flying the Flag at Weald Fete

Weald County Primary School invited the branch to take a stall at the annual fete on Saturday 22nd June. I represented the branch along with Cliff and Pauline Hayward. We did a roaring trade in branch honey, and there were several membership enquiries. We were also asked a number of questions about protecting bees in the environment.

The fete was a great success, complete with donkey rides, guess the weight of the lamb, a tug-of-war, welly throwing and Morris dancing alongside a wide range of craft and food stalls.

We have established a good working relationship with the school, and will be presenting a lesson on bees in the environment to Year 1 and 2 pupils before the end of term.

PS: The Dads team did not win the tug of war, they did not seem to be taking it all that seriously!
Liz Birchenough.



Liz Birchenough manning the beekeeping stall at Weald School fete.

Apiary on Offer

I live in Ightham Common and we have two acres of land. For the past two to three years we have had no honey bees in our garden but previously to that we had a great many all over our flowering thyme and lavenders. I can only assume that the hives locally have gone. We would love to have a couple of hives on our land. If any of your members would be interested could they please contact me by email. Many thanks, Caroline Standish. cstandish@gmail.com

Have Your Bees Got Sufficient Stores?

Bee inspectors have reported that bees are running very low on stores. In particular, beekeepers who have taken off oil seed rape honey early are finding their bees struggling to make up the deficit. The fluctuating weather has upset the production of pollen and nectar. So, it is important to keep a close watch on our colonies, and be prepared to feed.

Diary Dates

Saturday 6 July at 2pm: Hilbert Road apiary meeting.

Saturday 13 July at 2pm: Barrwood apiary meeting.

The Kent Show will take place on **Friday 5, Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 July** at the Kent County Showground, Detling, Maidstone. KBKA will have a display stand.

Keep up to date by logging on to our branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk>

Please send any articles or photos for the newsletter to Mary Staffurth: marystaffurth@yahoo.com