

SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

August 2019

Editor: Mary Staffurth

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

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



Keeping Track of the Queens at Barrwood

With a good number of beekeepers attending the July meeting, we split into two groups. Gary Muskett has become our queen marking champion, yet again finding and marking a queen. I think this was his fourth queen this season. Extra supers were added to the stronger hives, whereas with others, just the full centre combs were moved to the outside to encourage the bees to fill all the frames. In one colony however, despite the calm nature of the bees, there was no unsealed larvae or eggs. A frame containing eggs was removed from another colony and placed in the suspected queenless colony. Inspection a week later proved this to be the case, and the emergency cells produced were reduced to one. It is late in the season, which means the new queen might not mate successfully so our backup would be to unite the colony with the adjacent hive to get it through the winter.

We will have just one meeting in August, when we will assess which supers are suitable for extraction then add Porter escapes to clear them of bees.

Cliff Hayward, Branch Chairman

Can You Help Extract Honey?

Volunteers are needed to help extract the honey from the Barrwood apiary on Tuesday August 13. This is an ideal opportunity for those new to beekeeping to learn and practise the technique. If you can spare an hour or two please email pbhayward9@hotmail.com so that I can confirm it will be taking place and give full details of when and where. Thanking you in anticipation, *Cliff Hayward*.

More Honey Harvesting

One of our members in the Sevenoaks area will be extracting her honey on the 4-5th September. If there are any novice members in the area who are free during the day, and fancy a hands-on practical training session, email membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk and I will put you in touch.

Liz Birchenough

Bee Handling for Beginners at Hilbert Road

At the last meeting at the beginning of July we had four people attend the Apiary: two very experienced beekeepers and two new bee keepers. I placed one new beekeeper with an experienced one. They then went through two hives each. Both new beekeepers learnt from this exercise, in one case building confidence in handling bees during an inspection. They discovered one hive with two queen cells and another hive with no queen, no queen cells, young larvae or eggs. They took the appropriate by placing a frame of eggs in to the hive from a queen right hive. We had three hives with a good supply of stores and placed supers where needed. Hilbert Road Apiary currently has five hives.

Barry Chaseley

Barry Chaseley took on the responsibility of managing the Hilbert Road Apiary this year with some assistance, however he is on the point of moving to Sussex so we thank him for his efforts (*writes Peter Hutton Branch President*). What is particularly noticeable is the tidiness of the main building and the state of the colonies. We express our thanks to Barry and wish him well in his new home.

Vic Webb, a longstanding member, has taken on this task and will be joining our committee at the forthcoming AGM.

Water Bees

Sue Knights was alerted to a request for help on Facebook to remove these bees and rang me to ask if she could come along for the experience. We met up one Sunday in July, having asked the owner to drain down the water butt prior to our visit, so we could gain access to the base. We inverted the base to reveal they had constructed four bands of honeycomb and, using a fish slice to remove them, we mounted them in super frames using rubber bands etc. and placed them in one of my poly nucs. It took about an hour and as Sue was nearby, just around the corner in Plaxtol, she picked them up in the evening when all the flying bees had returned. I put the nucleus in my back garden waiting for them to build up before giving them to a new beekeeper. *John Farrow*

Photos by Sue Knights

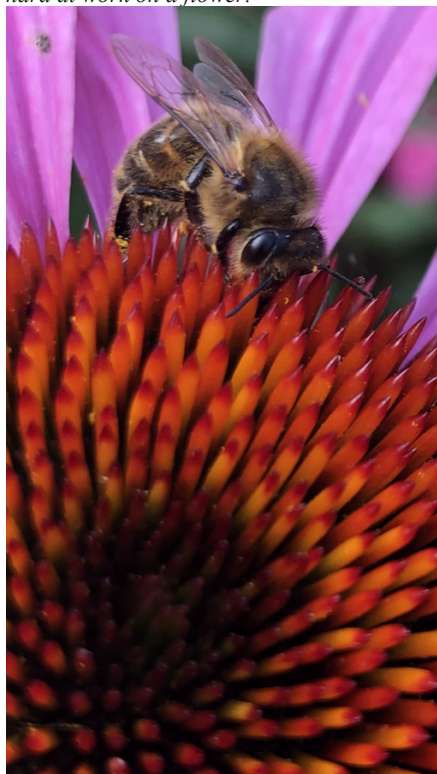


Learning About Bees

On 17th July, I gave a presentation on beekeeping to the year 1 and year 2 pupils at Weald County Primary School. The children were very enthusiastic and showed a remarkable level of understanding and interest in bees and other pollinating insects, and their importance in the environment. As it was just coming up to the end of term, they were able to add lots of things to their summer diaries for discussion when they get back to school next term. The school also has a small garden, and has some suggestions for bee friendly plants and a little bird bath to help the local insect population. The best question of the day was - does the queen bee have a crown?

Liz Birchenough

Sarah Rapley took this photo of a bee hard at work on a flower.



Queen Rearing Courses

The BBKA has asked us to highlight its weekend courses for beekeepers, with at least three years' experience, at several venues around the country:

Somerset: August 3rd & 4th at Quantock Apiary near Bridgwater.

Wales: August 10th & 11th at Gregynog Hall, Tygynon, Nr Newtown.

Warwickshire: September 14th & 15th at BBKA Apiary, Stoneleigh.

Cleveland: September 17th & 18th.

Details of other courses will be posted on the website when confirmed.

The course will be theory plus time in the apiary when different methods of queen rearing will be discussed and demonstrated. There will also be several queen related manipulations. There will be a maximum of twelve on each course and there will be two tutors.

The cost is £75.

You can apply for a place through the website:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/pages/shop/department/training-courses>

or contact the BBKA office on 02476 696679.

Bee Losses in Russia

There is an interesting article on BBC Online about a sharp decline in the number of bees in Russia. The use of poorly-regulated pesticides is being blamed. To read the article follow this link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49047402>

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

Diary Dates

Saturday 3 August at 2pm: Hilbert Road apiary meeting.

Tuesday 13 August: Barrwood honey extraction. Contact Cliff Hayward if you can attend: pbhayward9@hotmail.com

Saturday 10 August at 2pm: Barrwood apiary meeting.

Tuesday 15 September at 7.30pm: Bob Smith will be talking about the double brood system in the first of our evening meetings at Weald Memorial Hall, Sevenoaks Weald.

Saturday 21 September: Branch Honey Show at St. John's Church Hall, Hildenborough.

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