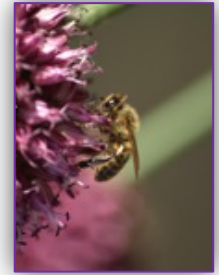


**SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
BEEKEEPERS  
BRANCH NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2024**

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### **Mixed Fortunes for Hilbert Road Colonies**



Sadly, the weather seems to have impacted on this season's splits. The two nucs failed early on. The original two poly colonies are both thriving and building up stores. They are both on new comb and will now receive minimal inspections for the rest of the season, checking on health and space.

The first split has failed. There were few bees and the stores looked as though they were being robbed by the neighbouring colonies.



The second split looks like it got off to a slow start with supersedure cells being built but not charged. The brood pattern is good and although we couldn't find the queen there was brood in all stages.

The Roses (the colony inherited from Richard Rose) are currently being encouraged to build new brood comb ready to effect a change. They are rapidly building stores so, hopefully, there will be a better honey harvest this year.

*Sue Knights, Hilbert Road Apiary Manager*

### **Asian Hornets at Kent County Show**

Sue Knights will be co-ordinating the KBKA Asian Hornet display at the Kent County Show this month and would like volunteers to man the information desk and to canvass the wider showground. Each shift is half a day. Your reward for helping is that you will receive a pass entitling you to spend the other half of your day enjoying the show. Footfall has been estimated at 8,000 across the weekend, so it would be perfect opportunity for the Kent Beekeeping Associations to pool their resources and continue to educate the wider public about the Asian Hornet threat and our fight to contain it. To volunteer contact Sue: [soozbeez@gmail.com](mailto:soozbeez@gmail.com)

### **Stewards at the County Show**

The Chief Steward at the County Show, Bob Smith, is also short of volunteers. If you are interested you can fill in the form that was emailed to all members on June 30, or you can contact Bob directly: [bsmith4945@hotmail.com](mailto:bsmith4945@hotmail.com) 07714 213738.

### **July Events**

The Sevenoaks Festival of Nature takes place on July 6th at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve. I will be there with a couple of branch members to spread the Asian Hornet message locally (*writes Liz Birchenough*). If you are not going to the county show, and are local to Sevenoaks, it would be great to see you.

St John's Church summer fete is on July 13th at St John's church centre in Hildenborough, where we will be holding our Honey Show in October. Again, this is a local engagement exercise to publicise the Asian Hornet problem.

## Swarms in June

There have been plenty of swarm call-outs so far this season with our team of 13 volunteers supplying swarms to more than half of the 25 people on the request list.

In the home apiary, swarm prevention measures have left the WBCs looking a little different with a variety of solutions used to allow the upper colonies to come and go.

This small swarm was on a fence post at a local riding stables - unfortunately as soon as it was put into a hive it absconded - it was determined not to stay put!!

*Sarah Rapley*



## European Foulbrood Outbreak

There were two confirmed cases of EFB in June in the area east of Tonbridge. Please continue to take great care with apiary hygiene, especially if you are moving between apiaries or are collecting swarms. If you have any suspicion about your colonies, contact the local bee inspector immediately.

Everyone who has live colonies should be registered on BeeBase. If there is a confirmed report of disease within a 3km radius of your apiary, you will get an automatic warning. Your personal details and apiary address are saved in a protected database on this website with no public access. BeeBase also contains a library of helpful information about bee health. Click here for the website: <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

## Apiary Site

A homeowner with a large garden in the Heaverham/Kemsing area would like to offer an apiary site to a beekeeper for a couple of hives. Contact Katherine Lang: [BartlettKatherine@hotmail.com](mailto:BartlettKatherine@hotmail.com)

## Honey Extractor Hire

The branch has two nine-frame mechanical extractors available to branch members. They cost £15 each for up to three days. The user is responsible for collection and return. The extractors are quite bulky, so you may need another person to help lift one in and out of your car. You will be given instructions on use and cleaning. Please make sure the extractor is clean and dry on return.

To hire an extractor contact Sarah Rapley [stweditor2@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:stweditor2@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk) if you are in the Sevenoaks area, or Liz Birchenough: [membershlp@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:membershlp@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk) if you are in Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area.

## Asian Hornet Traps

At this time of the season we are into the build-up stage for the Asian Hornet queens. They will be bringing on workers to help build the secondary nests. With this in mind, now is a good time to take down any queen traps you have out as the queens will not be flying. We will be starting to monitor for workers in the coming few weeks. Bait stations are good for this task.

*Martin Barrett, AHAT Coordinator*

## Discovering Bees is Child's Play



At the beginning of June, I was invited to speak to year three pupils at Sussex Road School, in Tonbridge. The visit was arranged by their teacher, to coincide with lessons about pollination and pollinating insects. The pupils were delightful and impeccably behaved. They had clearly paid full attention to what they had already been taught and had plenty of interesting questions. As well as a slide presentation, I took some flowers from my garden so the pupils could see the anthers and stigma. I also took along my nuc with some frames for the class to investigate. Taking the nuc was a bit of a cheat, but it is a lot more manageable than a full size hive! The class were also fascinated by my bee suit, especially as it smelt faintly of smoke. As part of the discussion, we talked about how fruit and vegetables grow; strawberries and raspberries were voted the favourite fruit. I managed to get a picture of a developing strawberry from my garden, so the class could see the remains of the flower, and the fruit beginning to develop in the middle. I also had some pictures of bees foraging on flowers so the pupils could see how the pollen brushed against the bees bodies as they foraged for nectar.

The discussion ended with ideas about how to look after pollinators and what type of flowers they like best. I also told them that insects need water, and explained how to make an insect friendly bird bath. Maybe we will get some budding beekeepers in the next few years.

*Liz Birchenough*

## Apiary Meetings

Saturday 13 July at 2pm: Barrwood Apiary, Shipbourne.  
Sunday 14 July at 11am: Hilbert Road Apiary, Tunbridge Wells.  
Sunday 28 July at 11am: Hilbert Road Apiary, Tunbridge Wells.

*Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: [marystaffurth@yahoo.com](mailto:marystaffurth@yahoo.com)  
Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>*