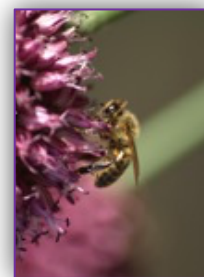


**SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS
BEEKEEPERS
BRANCH NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2025**

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Wishing You All A Happy New Beekeeping Year

Prize-winning Queen



Tim Johnston's photo of a captured queen won first prize at the Branch Honey Show.

Looking for an Out-Apiary?

We have received an offer of space for a beekeeper at The Plough in Hildenborough. If you are interested, please contact Hazel at the Plough: 01732 832149.

New Year Social

The Plough is also the venue for our branch dinner on Thursday January 16. If you haven't already signed up but would like to attend, please contact Chris Stewart: chris.stewart142@btinternet.com

Programme for 2025

The Committee is working on a programme of events for the coming year, which will be issued as soon as possible, and is hoping to include some more social events during 2025.

Hidden in the Undergrowth



I was contacted in December by a homeowner who had just purchased a property with a garden that had been neglected for fifty years. Clearing the scrub, they came across a green box, from which many honeybees flew when they tried to move it. I was called in, and with some help, relocated the box to my apiary. I can just about see a seam of bees through the hole but will wait until spring to angle grind the top off and move the colony into a hive. In the meantime, I have pushed some fondant into the hole, and made an entrance cover to deter mice. I will provide an update next year! *Sarah Rapley.*

Course for New Beekeepers

The Branch Introduction to Beekeeping Training course in January is fully booked but there are still spaces on the February course. It will take place on Sunday 16th February from 10am to 4pm at Weald Memorial Hall in Sevenoaks Weald. The fee is £55 for members or friends of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers, £65 for non-members. Contact Liz Birchenough for details: membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk

Beesuit Discount

B J Sherriff are currently offering a 10% discount plus free postage for their beesuits ordered during the off-season (before end April). You will need to quote Sevenoaks Beekeepers sob5 at the checkout and you may need your membership number. You can order online at www.bjsherriff.co.uk or by phone on 01872 863304.

Secret Life of a Beekeeper

Our December meeting featured the return of one of our committee members, Huw Griffiths, to continue with his fascinating description of his career as a forensic scientist, specialising in firearms. There was a great turnout, including guests from nearby branches, and we were treated to a cornucopia of home-made cake and the raffle of a Christmas hamper.

Huw was able to show images from incidents he had attended in the past but, interestingly, if you are ever called for jury service you will never be shown this type of image. In order not to distract or disturb the jury, they are shown a computer-generated model rather than the original photographs of the scene. Huw also gave a quick tutorial on the variety of DIY firearms and ammunition that can be produced. It seems frighteningly simple to either modify an existing weapon, such as upgrading a starting pistol to fire live ammunition, or to make one completely from scratch using 3D printing, for example. As for ammunition, simply putting enough speed into a common ball bearing is enough to make a lethal projectile.

Huw finished with some thoughts on recent incidents, in particular events in the USA. One of his main thoughts was that here in the UK, scientists like himself attend crime scenes to ensure that evidence is collected with a specific view of how each piece of evidence links the various parts of the scenario. However, in many jurisdictions the police collect the evidence and hand it over to the laboratory for analysis. Huw was at pains to point out that undertaking one test could damage or destroy residual evidence, so seeing the evidence in situ can help to decide what is the most appropriate form of analysis.

It was a privilege to be able to see into a normally hidden side of life. I think we all felt a heightened sense of appreciation for what Huw and his colleagues do to help make our everyday lives a little bit safer.

Liz Birchenough

Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: marystaffurth@yahoo.com

Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>