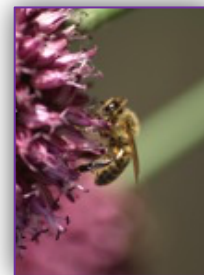


**SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS
BEEKEEPERS
BRANCH NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2026**

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Wishing You a Happy New Beekeeping Year

Branch Dinner

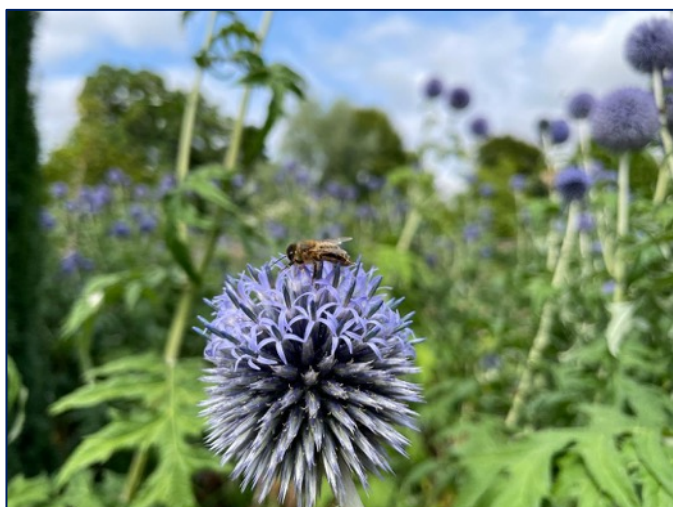
There's still time to book your place at the branch dinner and quiz night on Friday January 16. It will be at 7pm at The Plough, Leigh Road, Hildenborough, TN11 9AJ. If you would like to join in, please let Chris Stewart know by January 4: Chris.stewart142@btinternet.com

Winter Meetings

Our winter meetings will take place at Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Road, Sevenoaks Weald, TN14 6PT. Committee members are meeting early in January to finalise the speakers and timetable.

New Beekeepers

The branch will be running its one-day Introduction to Beekeeping course in the new year. The purpose is to introduce interested beginners to the responsibilities of beekeeping, the basic lifecycle and behaviour of honeybees, and the logistics and commitment needed to keep honeybees in a domestic environment. Visits to the branch apiary for hands-on experience will be arranged separately in the spring. The course will run from 10am to 4pm at Weald Memorial Hall, Long Barn Rd, Sevenoaks Weald, TN14 5PT. Participants can choose either Sunday January 25 or Sunday February 15. The fee is £60 for members or friends of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers, £70 for non-members. For further information and to make a booking please contact Liz Birchenough: membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk



Is it Time to Feed?

This bee was foraging in July but in January the colony must rely on stores to get through the winter. If you are one of those beekeepers who gives their bees a Christmas present of fondant, then you can relax. If not, you might want to consider whether your colonies have enough stores to last for the rest of the winter. If you are uncertain then you can put fondant into the top of the hive, above the hole in the crown board, and the bees will take it if they need it.

Photo by Simon Staffurth

Start the New Year by Baking a Cake

Delia Smith's Honey and Spice Cake

75g (3oz) runny honey
1 level tsp ground ginger
1 level tsp ground cinnamon
¼ level tsp ground cloves
225g (8oz) plain flour
75g (3oz) golden caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 small orange
finely grated zest of 1 small lemon
110g (4oz) butter, at room temperature
1 large egg, beaten
1 level tsp bicarbonate of soda
50g (2oz) mixed candied peel

For the icing: 175g (6oz) icing sugar
1tbsp lemon juice

Preheat the oven to gas mark 3, 325 degrees F, 170 degrees C.
Lightly butter a 20cm (8inch) round tin.

First of all, weigh a cup or small basin on the scales then weigh the 75g (3oz) of honey into it. Now place the basin into a saucepan containing barely simmering water and warm the honey a little but be careful – it mustn't be too hot, just warm.

Next, sift the spices and flour into a large mixing bowl then add the sugar and the orange and lemon zest. Now add the butter in small pieces then rub it lightly into the flour, using your fingertips, until the mixture becomes crumbly.

Next, lightly mix in the beaten egg, using a large fork, followed by the warm honey.

Then, in a small basin, mix the bicarbonate of soda with 3 tablespoons of cold water, stir until dissolved, then add it to the cake mixture and beat, quite hard, until the mixture is smooth and soft.

Then, finally, stir in the mixed peel and spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, spreading it out evenly. Bake the cake just above the centre of the oven for about 50 minutes or until well risen and springy to the touch. Cool it for 10 minutes, then turn it out on to a wire rack to get quite cold.

Meanwhile, prepare the icing by sifting the icing sugar into a bowl, then add 2 tablespoons of hot water along with the lemon juice and mix to a thin consistency that will coat the back of a spoon. If you don't think it's thick enough add a little more water.

Now place a large plate underneath the cake on the wire rack and pour the icing all over, letting it run down and coat the sides a bit.

Don't forget to check our new look website for all the latest information:

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

Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: newsletter@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk