

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

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### **Swarming Behaviour**

This swarm is the largest I've collected. I can't imagine the size of the colony in Plaxtol before this lot left in April.

*Sarah Rapley*



### **How to Build a Hive**

Our meeting on Wednesday 27th May will be a DIY carpentry workshop where you will be able to find out everything that is not in the instructions for making brood boxes from flat packs. You do not have to be experienced with DIY, as the suppliers intend the boxes to be made by anyone who can wield a hammer. It will take place at Weald Memorial Hall, Weald, Sevenoaks, at 7.30pm.

### **Spreading the Word**

In the middle of April, I visited the Langton Green Seniors coffee morning at All Saints Church to give a short presentation on the highs and lows of beekeeping. The audience members were very engaged and asked a number of thought-provoking questions. I was particularly pleased that everyone was aware of the YLAH situation and the importance of members of the public reporting any suspicious sightings. This was a very successful meeting which has allowed us to establish further contacts in the local community.

*Liz Birchenough*

### **Bee Equipment on Offer**

I have a deep Langstroth box (no frames), a smoker and a beesuit that I no longer need. Free to anyone who wants them. I am in Tonbridge. Contact Peter Findlay:

[petefindlay1@gmail.com](mailto:petefindlay1@gmail.com)

### **Off to a Flying Start at Hilbert Road**

We had our second meeting on April 12th. On the previous visit, Paddy did a sterling job of clearing a new area near the gates. We now have more room to use for future projects.

Although it was dry for the meeting, the wind added a chill that made doing a full inspection risky so we were limited as to what we could do. I was fortunate that Liz and David Seal came along and provided much appreciated support and experience. They each took a group to carry out the tasks needed.

We checked that colonies were flying and noted that plenty of pollen was being brought in. An additional brood box was added to some colonies in the hope that this would possibly delay, or even stop them swarming too early. Watch this space!

It was good to see more seasoned members attending and we welcomed Jessica and Stuart to their first apiary visit since joining the branch. They both went away happy with what they had learned.

*Martin Barrett*



## **Kemsing's High Dress Standards for Swarm Collecting**

John Mason was at a funeral when his bees swarmed but, fortunately, they were still there when he returned sometime later (*writes John Farrow*).

Unfortunately, it was then that he realized all his bee equipment was not at home but at work, so he had to hastily improvise on his protection.

However, when you see people wearing all sorts of colours of bee suits these days, he feels it's important that there are some of us maintaining suitably high dress standards!

### **Apiary Meetings**

**Saturday May 2** at Barrwood Apiary at 2pm  
**Sunday May 10** at Hilbert Road Apiary at 11am  
**Saturday May 16** at Barrwood Apiary at 2pm  
**Sunday May 24** at Hilbert Road Apiary at 11am

## **Kent Bees and Honey Show**

The Bees and Honey Show will take place at the Kent County Show in Detling on July 3, 4 and 5. The Chief Steward, Bob Smith, is looking for volunteers to help in the bees and honey display area. In return for working for half of one day, volunteer stewards receive a free admission ticket and the opportunity to spend the other half of the day at the show. There are also competitive classes for honey, other hive products and associated crafts. If you have any questions about the Kent Show, please contact Bob: [bobsmith4945@gmail.com](mailto:bobsmith4945@gmail.com)

*Don't forget to check our website for all the latest information: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>*

*Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: [newsletter@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk)*