

# SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

**AUGUST 2023**

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## Hive Experiments at Hilbert Road

The last couple of months have kept us very busy trying to manage the swarming instinct at Hilbert Road. This has resulted in our three original colonies multiplying to nine. The intention is to maintain a maximum of six permanent colonies in British Standard National Hives.



The additional colonies we have created will allow us to experiment with some other hives, both for our own experience and to add to the group knowledge for training courses. One of the WBC hives has already been put into service although it could do with a bit of tidying up. The colony living there doesn't seem to mind that it's a bit tatty, but it would be nice to refurbish it before next season.

Huw has spent some time over the last few weeks repairing the Top Bar Hive and making it a bit more user friendly by adding some handles and hinging the roof so that it can be opened by one person. It is our intention to introduce a colony in the next week or so. We have also acquired a Warre Hive which we hope to bring into use soon.

*Sue Knights, Barrwood Apiary Manager*

## Honey Sells Out at Summer Fair

As regular users of St John's Church Hall, in Hildenborough, we were invited to take a table at their Summer Fair on 15th July. This event combined traditional fete stalls with an exhibition of working model locomotives. We had not bargained on a triple whammy! Apart from being ladies' finals day at Wimbledon, the weather forecast was for very strong winds and showers, and the A21 Tonbridge bypass was closed for maintenance, diverting all the traffic right past the church.



We opted to take cover in the church itself, as the church hall was occupied by the modellers who needed space for their track layouts. This proved to be a good choice as lots of visitors came into the church for a sit down and to get away from the worst of the weather. We had a good spot right by the chancel steps from where we could see right down the aisle. We were sharing the space with the craft area for the younger children, so we were able to sell honey to passing grandparents. The smaller children were also enamoured with Beekeeper Bear, an old teddy bear I use to prop up my spare beesuit for demonstration purposes - just the right size, leaning on my skep.

All in all, even though it looked like we would have a difficult day, things turned out well in the end, and we have now sold out of the branch honey, just in time for the 2023 harvest. We also recruited a potential new member.

*Liz Birchenough, Treasurer and Membership Secretary*

## Richard Rose

10/02/36 – 08/07/23



*Richard serving tea at the visit to his apiary*

Sadly, Richard Rose, a familiar face at so many of our branch meetings, has died. Richard spent all his life in the Tunbridge Wells area and went to Tunbridge Wells Tech School. He trained as a car mechanic but later changed career when he and his wife jointly took on a jewellery, watch and clock repair business in Tonbridge. In later life he took up beekeeping and was an active member of the branch from the start. He was always keen to enter his cakes and honey in the annual show. At one point he had a total of 13 hives in the garden.

Richard originally belonged to the Tunbridge Wells branch before it merged with Sevenoaks. He served on the committee of the combined branch in the 1990's with early committee meetings being held in his home. He then took on the role of Honey Show secretary, which requires considerable planning and organisation. It was a role he fulfilled with characteristic courtesy and good humour.

In May 2018 many of us visited Richard's apiary at his home in Crowborough. His enthusiasm for beekeeping was clear. He had nine colonies in hives in different parts of his garden. The bees were very gentle.

In December 2019, Richard was awarded the Chairman's Cup. The Branch Chairman, Cliff Hayward, said that awarding the cup gave him the chance to say thanks to someone who had made a big contribution to our activities, adding: "This year I felt that it should be awarded to Richard Rose, who has been running our honey show for such a long time."

Richard leaves a son, a daughter and five grandchildren.



*Ready with the cups that were being awarded at the Branch AGM*



*Receiving the Chairman's Cup in 2019*

## Honey Show: Volunteers Needed

The committee is extending this year's Honey Show to include a craft fair, which will be held in the foyer at St. John's Church Hall from 2-4pm while the Honey Show is open to the public. The Honey Show itself will be unchanged. It will take place on Saturday 7th October.

We need branch members to volunteer to help on the day, either assisting on stalls or meeting and greeting the visitors. Members will be able to sell their own honey and hive products. We will also be providing refreshments and holding a raffle. If you would like to help, please contact Sue Knights: [soozbeez@gmail.com](mailto:soozbeez@gmail.com)

## Apiary Meetings

**Barrwood Apiary on Saturday 5 August at 2pm** with Cliff Hayward, Barrwood Apiary Manager: Honey harvest  
**Hilbert Road Apiary on Sunday 6 August at 11am** with Sue Knights, Hilbert Road Apiary Manager: Honey harvest  
**Barrwood Apiary on Saturday 12 August at 2pm** with Cliff Hayward, Barrwood Apiary Manager: Over-wintering  
**Hilbert Road Apiary on Sunday 20 August at 11am** with Sue Knights, Hilbert Road Apiary Manager: Over-wintering

