

# SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER JUNE 2023

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



## Celebrating World Bee Day

The Woodlands Garden Centre, near West Kingsdown, approached the branch with a request to assist with promoting World Bee Day on the 20th of May. We were more than happy to help, so Sarah Rapley and I spent the afternoon meeting customers to talk about pollinator-friendly gardening and beekeeping in general. Sarah brought along her observation hive, which was a big hit with the children in particular.



The garden centre staff had done a great job flagging pollinator-friendly plants and putting out bee fact notes. They had also given us a nice location close to the main door between the indoor and outdoor display areas, which they had decorated with a selection of bug hotels and a display of potted plants to suit all gardens. There was a canopy to provide shade so the observation hive was not in the sun.

It was interesting that the customers were, without exception, well-informed and concerned about maintaining a healthy population of pollinators. Many were aware of the Asian Hornet issue and were keen to read the identification information sheet.

It was a most rewarding afternoon. We had some very interesting conversations with the customers and staff at the garden centre and the weather was kind to us.

*Liz Birchenough, Membership Secretary and Treasurer*

## Extractors for Hire

The branch has two hand-powered extractors available for hire by members. They both have stainless steel drums, capable of taking nine national super frames at a time. The hire charge is £15 for three days; you will have to arrange collection and return. Payments should preferably be made directly into the branch account, using the same details as for paying your subs, otherwise by cheque or cash.

Please note the extractors are quite bulky, so you may need a friend to help lift one in and out of your car. You will be given instructions about the use and cleaning of the extractors.

If you are north of Tonbridge contact Sarah Rapley: [stweditor2@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:stweditor2@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk) For those of you in Tonbridge and further south contact Liz Birchenough: [membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.co.uk)

## Make the Most of Your Beeswax

After last year's successful wax workshop the event is back on **Tuesday 20 June at 7.30pm at Weald Memorial Hall**. There will be demonstrations of how to clean wax. There will also be the opportunity to make candles, beeswax wraps, polish and lip balm. This is an ideal opportunity for the non-beekeeping members of your family to get involved.

## Bees for Sale

A branch member has some nucs of bees available for sale: Marked and mated 2022 queens on six frames of brood and stores, treated for Varroa in December. Contact David London: 07825 276060  
[davidcglondon@gmail.com](mailto:davidcglondon@gmail.com).

## Why Local Bees are Best



The Aspen opposite my house has finally shown signs of life. Every year it seems to get later and later. I also witnessed, towards the end of May, Great Tits fledging. Phenology is the study of the changing patterns of our wildlife and how they are influenced by climate changes: bluebells flowering, the arrival of cuckoos, first queen bumblebees out of hibernation etc. To this list you can add the first swarms. I had a report of a swarm on April the 12th and there seem to have been quite a few this year.

From conversations I have had and from the size of our swarm request list, there appear to be quite a few beekeepers who have suffered winter losses. Conversely there seem to be a lot of swarms about this year, judging by the number of requests that have been fulfilled. Replacing your stocks with local swarms, rather than buying in bees, is a cheaper option and by sticking to locally adapted bees you are likely to benefit from calmer bees in successive generations. Another advantage of swarms is that they may well have come from wild stocks, which suggests that they have had to survive with Varroa without beekeeper intervention. There is increasing evidence from various studies that some wild bee stocks possess resistance to Varroa.

At Barrwood, most of the colonies eventually succumbed to the extended winter but May gave us the opportunity to get the survivors onto fresh comb. Regular comb replacement is widely recommended and there is certainly a lot greater growth in colony size of bees on fresh comb. Our aim is to have strong colonies going into winter.

Finally, do remain vigilant for Asian Hornet. Using monitoring traps baited with Trappit is the most effective way. Fortunately, mine have attracted only wasps, flies and a European hornet so far this year but it is important we spot the arrival of the queens and primary nests. Once they produce secondary nests there will be many new queens and the population will rapidly become established.

*Cliff Hayward, Branch Chairman and Barrwood Apiary Manager*

## Apiary Site Offer

My name is Ade Passos, and my wife and I run a small Glamping Business at New Park Farm in Groombridge. You can check us out on [www.caracolcamping.co.uk](http://www.caracolcamping.co.uk)

I am wondering if any of your members is looking for a potential site for bee hives. We have a three-acre field planted with wild flowers that may be of interest. There is a perfect fenced-off location for the hives.

Contact: [adrianppassos@gmail.com](mailto:adrianppassos@gmail.com)

## Apiary Meetings

Club apiary meetings in June will focus on queen raising and comb replacement, using the shook swarm and Bailey methods.

**Hilbert Road Apiary on Sunday 4 June at 11am** with Sue Knights, Hilbert Road Apiary Manager

**Barrwood Apiary on Saturday 10 June at 2pm** with Cliff Hayward, Barrwood Apiary Manager

**Hilbert Road Apiary on Sunday 18 June at 11am** with Sue Knights, Hilbert Road Apiary Manager

**Barrwood Apiary on Saturday 24 June at 2pm** with Cliff Hayward, Barrwood Apiary Manager

*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/>*