

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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See our website: www.kentbee.com/stw/



One of the freshly marked queen bees



Inspecting one of the hives



Tea-time at Richard's

Richard's Apiary

We had a beautiful sunny day for the visit to Richard Rose's apiary. He had nine colonies in hives in different parts of his garden, near Crowborough; three others had died out during the winter.

We split into two groups to inspect the bees, which were all very gentle. In several of the hives we succeeded in marking the queens. Peter Hutton demonstrated how to hold the queen in his hand while she was marked. Beginners were given the opportunity to inspect the colonies too. Richard had already added supers; in at least one of the hives old brood frames were replaced.

Mary Staffurth

What do the Boy Bees do all Day?

I spent a delightful afternoon talking about honeybees to Year One and Two pupils - who are aged five and six - at Shoreham Village School (writes Liz Birchenough).

The children were a little disappointed that there were no live bees in the classroom, but were really interested to touch the parts of the hive. They especially liked the texture and smell of foundation. They also were really impressed with the bee suit, and asked some insightful questions, such as: if the pollen and nectar are collected by the girl bees, and they make the honey, what do the boy bees do?

We looked at some photos of me inspecting my hive; the children wanted to know if I got stung and if it hurt the bees when I took the frames out of the hive. The class had a really good attempt at guessing how many bees live in one colony, and how much honey one bee can produce in its life.

We also looked at photos of bees at various stages. As we all know, the eggs are difficult to see, but they could see the larvae clearly, and understood that these would grow into bees. We also looked at pictures of bees collecting pollen and nectar, and talked about why pollination is important. Pollination is a topic the children will start to learn about next year, so the teacher was keen for the discussion to begin. The class voted strawberries as their favourite fruit pollinated by bees.

The children sent me a delightful "thank you" card: they had drawn a series of hexagons and each child wrote their name in their cell, complete with a drawing of a bee or a flower.

Barrwood Apiary

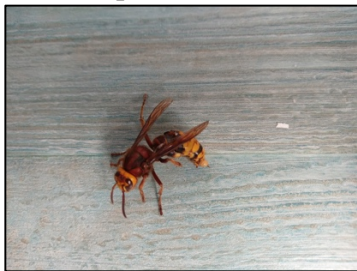
At the first May meeting, on the 12th, one of the colonies (hive 8) was on the verge of swarming (*writes Sarah Rapley*). We made a nuc up with the queen and some brood, and left one queen cell in the original box. Cliff Hayward had previously added eggs to another colony (hive 5) so we left it alone in case the queen was on a mating flight. Peter Hutton brought the 14 x 12 eke, which we needed, and we positioned the 10 new frames above the old colony so hopefully they'll move upwards and draw out the comb. Seven of us attended and it was just about warm enough but with light rain.

On May 26 I went to Barrwood with a potential new beekeeper from our village and five other beekeepers (*writes Colin Ellis*). We inspected all hives. Hive 8 had a very heavy super and several queen cells including a sealed cell, and no eggs or larvae. The nuc had drawn comb and we saw the marked queen. Hive 5 had a light super; honey, nectar and pollen were present and the queen was found and marked. Hive 3 had honey and brood but we saw no queen, no eggs and no larvae. Hive 6 was very active and a bit aggressive with multiple queen cells. In the deep frame hive the top boxes have been filled with honey; I think the plan was that the queen should move up so that the old frames could be destroyed, but I am not sure if that will happen now the top box is full. There is a field of rape nearby so some of the heavy supers may need extraction in a couple of weeks.

Hilbert Road Apiary

Richard Rose has held three meetings so far. One colony has died out and one where the brood box has been changed has done quite well. Stephanie's donated hive was strong with six frames of brood and her eke was taken by Peter Hutton to Barrwood. Average attendance was five.

European Hornet?



I have only ever seen a hornet once before and caught this one in the bathroom. I assume it is the standard European Hornet. *Philip Runacres*

Volunteer Stewards Needed

We are still looking for volunteers to be stewards at the Kent Show this year. It takes place at the Kent Showground in Detling on the 6th, 7th and 8th July with setting up on the 5th July. If you are interested please contact me.
Bob Smith, Chief Steward, Tel: 07714213738 or e-mail bobsmith4945@gmail.com

For Sale

Paul Farrar of West Wickham, nr Bromley, is offering beekeeping equipment for sale. He says all equipment is secondhand and mostly in very good condition. Some is in good or acceptable and perfectly usable condition:

hive frames / queen excluders, framed metal / supers / brood boxes / open mesh floors / lifts (for WBC hives) / brood foundation, sheets of / filter, stainless steel / bucket, honey, large plastic / cut comb containers / beeswax sheets / natural beeswax blocks / bucket, cone-shaped, metal, with top / containers, cylindrical, plastic, for storing honey / dippers, traditional honey, wood, for sampling / smoker, copper / skep, traditional, for collecting honey - honeycombs / containers, lids, clear glass jars, (454g/1 lb) and labels

Prices are mainly up to half of the new listed catalogue price. Contact paulthetutor@hotmail.com 07879 231642

Diary Dates

Saturday June 2 at 2pm: Meeting at the Branch Apiary at Hilbert Road

Saturday June 9 at 2pm: Meeting at the Branch Apiary at Barrwood with John Farrow and Sarah Rapley

Saturday June 16 at 2pm: Meeting at the Branch Apiary at Hilbert Road

Saturday June 23 at 2pm: Meeting at the Branch Apiary at Barrwood with Cliff Hayward.

Send any photos or articles for inclusion in the newsletter to Mary Staffurth: marystaffurth@yahoo.com

Don't forget to stay in touch with all the latest beekeeping news and events on our website: www.kentbee.com/stw/