

SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BEEKEEPERS BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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



Happy New Beekeeping Year!

Preparing for the Beekeeping Season at Hilbert Road

We are getting off to an early start at Hilbert Road apiary with two Winter meetings to carry out stock taking, marking of equipment and to clear up before the bee season gets started. The new apiary manager, Vic Webb, will lead the meetings and says he would welcome anyone helping to make a record of progress either by taking notes or photos.

The meetings will be on Sunday 12th January at 10am and Sunday 16th February at 10am.

How to Prevent Bees Swarming

The first branch meeting of 2020 will be on Wednesday 15th January at Weald Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. John Hendrie will be giving a talk on the Bailey comb change and Demaree swarm control techniques. The Bailey method involves replacing old frames in a hive; with the Demaree method you split the colony by separating the eggs and brood from the queen.

Branch honey will be on sale at the meeting from Liz Birchenough. You can pay by cash or cheque: £5 for 12oz jars, £6.50 for 16oz jars.

Please note that all the indoor meetings this year have been moved to the third Wednesday of the month because a block booking by another group has prevented us from having the hall on Tuesdays.

Controlling Varroa

At our February meeting, on Wednesday 19th, Steve Riley of Westerham Branch will give a talk on queen trapping as a method of controlling varroa without the need for chemicals.

Beginners Course

On Sunday 23rd February there will be a Beginners Course run by Elizabeth Birchenough with help from Sue Knights. It will run from 10am to 4pm at Weald Memorial Hall, Sevenoaks Weald TN14 6PT.

The course will be a very basic introduction to beekeeping aimed at those with no previous experience. The purpose is to introduce interested beginners to the responsibilities of beekeeping, the basic lifecycle and behaviour of honey bees, and the logistics and commitment needed to manage bees in a domestic environment. This is a classroom event.

The cost is £30 for members and £40 for non-members. There are only a few places left, but there will be a waiting list in case anyone drops out. For further details or to reserve a place contact Liz Birchenough: membership@sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk

Keep up to date with all the branch meetings and events in 2020 by clicking on our website link:

<http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/meetings-and-events/>

Looking for Bees?

If you are a beginner who is keen to buy bees at the start of the season you might be considering your options. Peter Hutton says bees being sold by one beekeeping company this year could be a good investment:

Park Beekeeping are selling 1.5 kg packages of bees @ £145 this year rather than nuclei. These will be available for April delivery, which is more certain than the delivery of nuclei which, in my experience, are often not ready in time to build up. Package bees react as if they were a swarm and can be hived on fresh foundation and fed heavily with syrup. Once comb is drawn the caged queen can be released and the bees are good to thrive. Contact: Godfrey Munro, Park Beekeeping, Blackheath – 02086949960
info@parkbeekeeping.com

Another option would be to buy a nucleus from another beekeeper. Vic Webb writes: I could provide nuclei at the going rate as soon as my hives are strong enough. I have some good bees.
Contact: vw@wigg.co.uk

Branch Officers

At the AGM we elected our Branch Officers for the forthcoming year. Since then the committee has met and confirmed the other posts necessary for running the organisation. This is the full list:

Chairman: Cliff Hayward

Vice-Chairman: John Hendrie

Treasurer: Liz Birchenough

Secretary: John Farrow

Other Committee Members: Sarah Rapley; Richard Rose; Sue Knights; Vic Webb

Hilbert Road Apiary Manager: Vic Webb

Barrwood Manager: Cliff Hayward

Newsletter Editor: Mary Staffurth

Membership Secretary: Liz Birchenough

Honey Show Secretary: Richard Rose

Honey Show Assistants: Sue Knights and Sarah Rapley

Librarian: Sarah Rapley

Newsletter Distribution: Liz Birchenough

Web Editors: Sarah Rapley and John Farrow

Swarm Co-ordinator: John Farrow

Refreshments at indoor meetings: Pauline Hayward

Asian Hornet Coordinator: Vanessa Jones

Programme Secretary: The Committee

Pictures from Our Christmas Meal



To see more of Paul Abbott's photos from our meal at the Buck's Head click on the link to our website:

<http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Xmas-Party-2019-1.pdf>