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Apiary Meetings

Dounhurst Farm, Skiff Lane, Wisborough Green RH14 0AA

Please will visitors to the Apiary park on the grass verge, not the Farm drive. Our host is very good to us by letting us use the area. The least we can do is leave his drive clear

**Saturday 20th December – Apiary meeting – Oxalic Acid
Hive Treatment 2.00pm.**

Winter Evening Meetings

The Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood

11th December. 7.30pm – Monica Lucas - "The Bee and Butterfly Garden"

"Monica Lucas is a member of our Chichester Division and has now retired from a life of various careers. She started her working life in an administrative post within the pension scheme of Imperial Tobacco, following which she joined the army and spent 6 years in experimental gunnery. Her interest in horticulture developed over a six year period working in the GLC Parks Department where she secured formal qualifications and subsequently worked with Dr Peter Thompson at the seed bank at Wakehurst Place. In the interim, she has run her own nursery in Somerset, after managing the village shop and post office for 9 years and has now retired to tend her 3 acre garden at Sidlesham."



We wish all our members and their families a very Happy Christmas
and a happy and healthy New Year



ADVANCE NOTICE – Fuller details in subsequent Newsletters

15th January 2009 – **Christine Stevens** speaking on marketing, product development and creative packaging and labelling

PATTERSON IN PRINT



Due to the poor state of colonies in the spring, and the heavy winter losses, samples of live bees were taken and sent to NBU on April 28th. These were taken from Dounhurst, Tom and Gordon, Daisy, and myself. We have just had results, and although not consistent they all have at least one of the following, Deformed Wing Virus, Black Queen Cell Virus, *nosema apis*, and *nosema ceranae*, some have all four!!

DWV and BQCV were present in many colonies pre-varroa, but are greatly increased due to varroa acting as a vector. Keeping varroa at a low level obviously helps in their control. Richard Dyer has monitored our colonies regularly (5 times this year!) and our counts have been very low, so it shows how critical it is.

Nosema apis is normally seen as a problem with non native bees, but *nosema ceranae* may be a different issue. In order to deal with it we have invested in some microscopes so we can provide a diagnostic service for members. A few of our members will have training in the next few weeks.

Can I suggest you seek information from NBU booklets and the many websites that deal with these diseases. The web is a great place for gleaning information, but you should make sure the source is reliable.

Jane Anderson, Diana Briault, Suzanne Tilley, Meg, and myself all went to London to “march” on Downing Street to present the petition campaigning for help in the research for bee diseases. We then moved on to the House of Commons where a few lobbied their MP’s. I was one of the “lucky” ones to get inside, but witnessed very few MP’s. Those who did take the trouble to see us were office staff. Perhaps the day of the US Presidential elections was not the best choice. There were around 400 beekeepers there, with a surprising number of younger people with children in pushchairs. Of course the cameras were largely on the smokers, and interviewers only interested in the more comical element.

I understand one person being interviewed said that if bees disappeared blackbirds and owls would disappear within a year!! As one is an omnivore, and the other a carnivore I’m not quite sure how they worked that one out, and it’s comments of that nature that does beekeeping no good.

Roger





Lecture Notes from 20th November 2008

Norman L Carreck BSc, Cbiol, MIBiol, FRES, NDB

"The origin of bees and their classification as an indigenous species"

On 20th November, we, with several friends from local Associations, welcomed Norman Carreck to Loxwood where he treated us to a talk on "The origin of bees and their classification as an indigenous species". Norman is currently Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, and of the Technical Committee of the British Beekeepers Association as well as a the Central Association of Beekeepers and Senior editor of the Journal of Apicultural Research, so we were honoured to have such an eminent speaker! In the background he gave, the reason for the 'Darwinian-sounding' title became clear. Australia produces a lot of honey for export, and the commercial producers there have recently come under extreme pressure to reduce their enterprises or remove their bees completely from areas seen as ecologically sensitive. Honeybees are not native to Australia, having been imported around 1830, and there is a big backlash against beekeepers and the interference with the 'natural' state of affairs there.

Likewise, there have been reports of UK beekeepers also having been asked to remove bees from certain areas, particularly following an article published in the journal : 'Conservation Land Management' by D Sheppard who argued that there are no wild bees in UK, just feral colonies, genetically mixed with imported strains, and that they, like Australian bees had no place in an ecologically sensitive area. The talk gave a robust defence for maintaining honeybees as part of our ecology.

Bees have been thought to originate from Asia (or recent research shows maybe Africa), with strains developing as they spread across the continent, separated by seas and high mountain ranges like the Alps, which they did not cross, resulting in Eastern Europe and Italian strains, as well as our own dark brown (or black) bee and others.

Honeybees could be native to the British Isles, having followed the flowering plants North across the land bridge with Europe. There is also a possibility that they were imported by the earliest civilisations: there is evidence of bees and bee products in Bronze-age and Viking remains and even further back than that. Even if bees had been imported back in Viking or Bronze-age times, then the mixing of strains has happened over a very long time indeed, and any ecological impact would have begun all those years ago.

So what of the dark brown bee? Genetic mapping of strains shows that, remarkably, bee genes do not mix well, and there are pockets around the world, and indeed in the British Isles, of bees with similar characteristics to those the places from which they originated. In such places, where the dark brown bee genes are strong, it may be possible to conserve a bee more like our original type.

In conclusion, whilst honeybees may, on occasions, compete with rare populations of bumble bees (therefore requiring exclusion) it is clear that they have played a role in our British ecology for many thousands of years and should keep doing so! It was a fascinating evening !

Judy



National Honey Show.

JOSEPH READY- WINS SUSSEX CUP

I'm glad to say Joseph had a result. Joseph got a 1st in the box of honey sweet class and 2nd in the cut comb open classes, but more importantly he got a 2nd, two 3rds and one commended, in the Sussex classes which won him the Mrs Matthews Cup.



Notices

THANKYOU EVERYBODY for the book and tokens I was given at Norman Carreck's talk! It was enormously generous of you and a complete and utter surprise. On the wish list for the garden tokens are a winter-flowering fragrant honeysuckle, a heavenly bamboo (not actually a bamboo but a sort of Berberis which has white flowers for the bees' attention), and a Mahonia. Our garden is pretty well stuffed already but I shall find spaces for these, and no doubt one or two existing specimens will go by the wayside over the winter, and as Christopher Lloyd used to say, you should see the death of a plant as an opportunity to plant something new rather than as a tragedy! And I have plenty of time in the winter for reading the David Attenborough book, which was on my Christmas list. Thank you all very much.

Sue Cooper

IT'S TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR 2009 MEMBERSHIP!!

A membership / renewal form is attached to this newsletter, and although it has been greatly revised form last year, BBKA memberships and others may still confuse. If you have any doubts or queries, please give me a call (evenings 01403 752169) and I will advise.

Thank-you!

Judy



BBKA Exams.

The long evenings are upon us.

This is a good time to increase and update your beekeeping knowledge.

There is no better way to focus that learning than to set yourself a deadline. Those who have been keeping their own bees for over a year, can take their

Basic Beekeeping Assessment

This takes place at the apiary and is in two parts, handling a hive and theory.

This Basic Assessment is the gateway to all other qualifications.

To continue on the pathway, there are modular exams.

In 2009, the Modular Examinations will be held on 21st March.

Applications have to be in by 10th Feb. 2009.

For further information, please contact:

Rosanne Blacklock

Harmony

Melrose Place

Storrington RH20 3HH

or e-mail: rosanne@beesandhives.co.uk

National Events and News

British Beekeeping Association

BBKA Spring Convention

17 – 19 April 2009 Stoneleigh, Coventry

Here: http://www.britishbee.org.uk/news/spring_convention/index.shtml

BBKA - Events Diary

Here: <http://www.britishbee.org.uk/calendar/calendar.php>

Bee-Craft goes Digital

Free on line Nov and Dec. Here: <http://www.bee-craft.com/>

Apimondia 2009 – Montpellier , France

Details Here: <http://www.apimondia2009.com/pages/?all=accueil&idl=22>



WEST SUSSEX BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



Website www.wsbka.org.uk

County News – December 2008

County Diary – Around the Divisions – all Members are most welcome at all Meetings

Chichester – Contact John Stevens. – Email jeem@compuserve.com

Meetings will be at the Bader Arms in Tangmere and will commence punctually at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 10th December – Margaret Thomas, speaking on the creation of Nuclei and on the preparation of various products made with honey.

Worthing Contact Brian Tolworthy on 01903 241369

Website www.worthingbeekeepers.fsnet.co.uk/org.uk

Winter meetings at Ferring village hall. Arrive at 7.15pm for 7.30pm start.

Thursday 11th December – A talk by Margaret Thomas NDB

Friday 19th December 10.30am – Pauline Ford's out apiary

BBKA Executive Propositions

The BBKA Executive have a series of propositions that will be made at the Annual Delegate Meeting in January 2009, regarding the relationship with agrochemical companies and suppliers of bee husbandry products. This will form the future policy of dealing with the issue of endorsing pesticides, which has caused a few problems in the past, and has been aggravated by recent events in central Europe.

The propositions can be viewed in full on the Members Section of the BBKA website <http://www.britishbee.org.uk/>. Please read it and let your Divisional Representative to WSBKA know your views **before 3rd December**. It is an important issue and one where beekeepers should have an input.

Divisional representatives are – Christine Stevens stevensbees@yahoo.co.uk

Brian Tolworthy briantolworth@talktalk.net Roger Patterson
r.patterson@pattersonpressings.co.uk

If you wish to offer material for inclusion in future editions of "County News", please contact John Glover at glover.flethingshollow@gmail.com

