



**West Sussex Beekeepers  
Association**  
**Wisborough Green Division**



## **Newsletter June 2008**

### **Officers and Contact Information**

<b>President</b>	<b>Mr Roger Patterson</b>	01403 790 637	<a href="mailto:r.patterson@pattersonpressings.co.uk">r.patterson@pattersonpressings.co.uk</a>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Mr Ray Noakes</b>	01403 700 521	<a href="mailto:raynoakes@hotmail.com">raynoakes@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	<b>Mr Andrew Riley</b>	07917 101386	<a href="mailto:andrew_riley@btinternet.com">andrew_riley@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	<b>Mr John Glover</b>	01403 751 889	<a href="mailto:glover.fetchingshollow@googlemail.com">glover.fetchingshollow@googlemail.com</a>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Mrs Judy Knight</b>	01403 752 169	<a href="mailto:judyknight@hotmail.co.uk">judyknight@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Mr Rupert Burne</b>	01798 813 513	<a href="mailto:rburne@cht20.co.uk">rburne@cht20.co.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>			<a href="http://www.wgbka.org.uk">www.wgbka.org.uk</a>

### **Apiary Meetings** (Dounhurst Farm, Skiff Lane, Wisborough Green)

All Wednesday meetings are followed by a BBQ. Please bring own food

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 6.30pm

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June, Beginners 12.00, Advanced 2.00pm

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 6.30pm

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July, Beginners 12.00, Advanced 2.00pm we will be visited by our neighbours, Petersfield BKA. Come along and find out about them and their beekeeping.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July, 6.30pm

**Sunday** 27<sup>th</sup> July, Beginners 12.00, Advanced 2.00pm **N.B. Sunday!**

### **Patterson in Print** – Roger Patterson

This month I am starting with some very good news. Rosanne sat one and Daisy sat two BBKA exam modules, and I am delighted they have both done well. Rosanne achieved a Distinction, and Daisy a Credit and a Distinction. They have both started their beekeeping at WG, but their achievements are down to their own hard work and dedication. Well done both of you.

I mentioned last month that bees overall had not wintered well, but since then we have had a couple of weeks of good weather and they have recovered extremely well. A couple of my colonies that were weak quickly built up, and both filled a broodchamber in 5 days! Many beekeepers were caught out and their colonies swarmed. During telephone conversations and visits, it has become obvious that a few people who have kept bees for some time do not know about the swarming process, or what happens in the colony both before and after a swarm issues. Another thing that is not known by some is the life cycles of the queens and workers. All

of this is important and the information is in all the good books. If you don't know it please learn it, as it is crucial.

There seems to be a view by some that beginners are only welcome at Saturday meetings. This is not the case, it's just that due to numbers we have a special session for them on Saturdays, although they are free to join in with the later advanced group if they wish. With increased experience it is expected that some will be on the borderline, and it may benefit them to attend both sessions. On Wednesdays we split the groups up into different abilities. All members are welcome to all meetings.

There has recently appeared in the American magazine "Bee Culture" an obituary for a beekeeper who was killed in an accident when he was trapped between a hive loader and a lorry. He was running a bee business with 2,000 colonies. He was 86 years old!

As I mentioned at a recent meeting there are strange things happening with bees at the moment. I have either seen, or heard from reliable beekeepers:-

- Sealed "queen cells" that are round and about the size of a marble with nothing inside.
- Eggs on a frame one day, but "disappeared" the next.
- Emergency queen cells built when in theory the larvae are too old. This suggests the bees are holding back on larval development.
- Colonies swarming with either no queen cells, or where the cells hadn't been sealed.

None of these things should be happening, but they are. As I keep saying we must all be much better beekeepers, inspect our colonies fully, know when something is wrong, and clip our queens.

The queen problems are still with us. Already this year I have seen queens "disappear", one of mine, and two at Dounhurst, one of which headed a colony that put up queen cells. Since writing that I saw 3 colonies in one day where the queens have "disappeared". In no instance was the timing right for the queens to have been damaged during manipulation.

I hope those who attended the Auction enjoyed themselves. We normally get 200-250 lots, with the previous highest number of 420, but this year I managed to sell 453 lots. I was continually selling from 1.00 – 6.20. Prices were generally good.

The temper of bees has been the subject for some discussion recently, as well as the theme of my talk to WSBKA. In my opinion beekeeping should be enjoyable, and well-mannered colonies are much better to handle than bad. Along with temper I will include such traits as "running", and although a colony that "runs" may be good tempered, they should both be culled. I have recently visited some beekeepers with colonies that are a joy to handle, yet others that are pretty grim, and in one case the inspection was abandoned, and the owner of those was in my group at a meeting where every colony behaved impeccably, apart from one that were slight runners. The experienced has given the member the opportunity to see what can be achieved, and a determination to improve his own bees.

It is actually quite easy to improve bees by selection, and even easier in a group situation like ours. When I came back into beekeeping a few years ago I was given 5 colonies that were very variable in temperament, and I raised queens from the best, and ruthlessly culled the worst. The result is what we see at Dounhurst today, and although they deteriorated slightly last year they are still very good. There are many members who have had queens either directly from me or the apiary, and apart from the odd rogue, they are all very good.

I believe that temper is reliant on two things, the bees themselves, and the quality of handling. Although the standard of handling in the U.K. is very poor, I think that due to the high standards we insist on at Dounhurst most of our members are pretty good, some being excellent. Very often excuses are made for bad temper e.g. thundery weather, foraging on OSR, etc, etc, but if any of mine are "touchy" when they are otherwise good tempered I still mark them down for requeening. The record sheet that is downloadable from the website has a column for temper.

If you have colonies that are genuinely bad tempered then please let me know and we will try to do something about it for you.

There are at least ten instances where members have given bees either to the Div or to other members who have lost all their bees. This shows how kind our members are. Thank you.

As part of National Insect Week <http://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk/> we hope to have an open event, and on behalf of Horsham Natural History Society I am organising a "Wildlife Evening" on Thurs June 26<sup>th</sup> in a field and wood in Slinfold. We will look for, identify, and study all forms of wildlife. There will also be some moth trapping later in the evening. The field has not been worked for at least 20 years, and the wood is mixed with part of it being hornbeam that was formerly coppiced. This should prove an interesting event, I am expecting at least one WG member will be amongst the tutors. Please contact me for joining instructions if you are interested. It is open to everybody.

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

**Chichester** – Contact John Stevens. – Email [ieem@compuserve.com](mailto:ieem@compuserve.com)

**June 18<sup>th</sup>** – "The Honey Harvest" – with Christine Stevens

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

**Worthing** Contact Brian Tolworthy on 01903 241369

Website [www.worthingbeekeepers.fsnet.co.uk/org.uk](http://www.worthingbeekeepers.fsnet.co.uk/org.uk)

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

**June 11<sup>th</sup>** – 6.00pm – Out apiary meeting and social gathering

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Out apiary meeting

**June 29<sup>th</sup>** – A visit to Neville Child's home apiary

## **Beekeeping Simple and Clear**

BBKA have forwarded us details of this symposium which is being organised and staged by Apimondia in cooperation with the Beekeeping Association of Romania and will take place in Bucharest from 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September. Anybody interested to receive full information, please Email me [glover.fletchingshollow@gmail.com](mailto:glover.fletchingshollow@gmail.com).

## **Winter Loss Survey**

**Earlier this month, BBKA mailed this survey to a random selection of members. If you**

were amongst the 10% of total membership to receive one, and you have not yet completed and returned it to BBKA, please would you do so urgently. If you have already done so – thank you.

## Basic Assessment

A reminder to all members who wish to sit their basic assessment this summer – Please complete your application and ensure it is signed by the appropriate divisional representative. The application and syllabus are available as a download from the BBKA website or from your division.

Completed forms, with a cheque payable to BBKA for £10.00 should be sent to: Rosanne Blacklock, Harmony, Melrose Place, Storrington, RH20 3HH.

## Examination Successes

Congratulations to the following members who have been successful in their recent examinations:-

**Rosanne Blacklock – Neville Child – Lesley (Daisy) Day – Carolyn Farley - Pauline Ford – Angela Pocock.**

## For Sale

A number of 4 frame nuclei will be available shortly from Luciano Scandian, Telephone 01273 454041. It is understood that these are on British Commercial Frame. Contact Luciano for further details and viewing.

If you wish to offer material for inclusion in future editions of “County News”, please contact John Glover at [glover.fetchingshollow@gmail.com](mailto:glover.fetchingshollow@gmail.com)