



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



## **Newsletter March 2008**

### **Officers and Contact Information**

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### **Our Own AGM followed by Mead Making**

**What do I do differently to produce prize winning mead rather than  
something only suitable for paint stripping?**

**Thursday March 20th 7.30pm The Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood**

### **Winter Meetings**

- 1st March** West Sussex Beekeepers Convention – Lodge Hill, Pulborough - see note below
- 20th March** AGM to be followed by 'Mead-Making' by Roger Patterson and Derek Ready

### **WSBKA Annual Convention**

**Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup> At Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough 9.30am to 5.15pm**

The West Sussex Beekeepers Association are pleased to invite beekeepers and those interested in bees and beekeeping to attend their annual convention. The event is intended to be of interest to beekeepers of all standards. As well as the main lectures it includes some specialist seminars and also some seminars to interest those with less academic inclinations. Details in last month's newsletter and on our website

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

**Please** will visitors to the apiary to park on the grass verge, not in the farm drive. Our host is good to us by letting us use the area and the least we can do is leave his drive clear.

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2.00pm

The second apiary meeting this year will be on Sun 9th March 2.00 at Dounhurst. This will be preceded with Sunday lunch for those who wish. **Roger must know in advance for booking lunches**, preferably by Wed 5th. We will do the normal winter checks on the bees i.e. food,

dryness, etc. I do not expect the meeting to take any more than 2 hours. There will be no tea. Some of our colonies are strong and others weak. Come along and see how they have progressed since the last meeting in January.

**Spring / Summer** meetings will start at the apiary on **Saturday April 12<sup>th</sup>**. To improve the focus of the meetings there will be two start times - Beginners will start at 12.00 and Advanced at 2.00pm. The reason we're doing this is to make sure all members get the most from the sessions. It's up to members to decide which category they think they fit into and obviously they can change groups or stay for both as appropriate. A full time table for summer meetings will be in the next newsletter.

## **Bee Auction**

Now is the time to start collecting your unwanted kit for the auction, and when sowing seeds, transplanting, splitting, etc to remember the plant stall. The date this year is 10<sup>th</sup> May – further details in the next newsletter

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

Despite having our Beginners and Improvers Day 10 weeks earlier this year than last, therefore less time to organise it, we still had over 60 people book. This was rather surprising, and shows that beekeeping is still being investigated as a potential hobby, despite all the media doom and gloom. We have several potential new members and the next stage will be to get them looking inside a real hive. We have had some lovely comments and not only were they about the content, but the friendliness of our members who were there. There is a tremendous effort that goes into an event such as this and I would like to thank Andrew Riley, Derek and Joseph Ready, Judy, and Daisy for contributing to the event, and special thanks to Elizabeth Ready for a superb effort in getting us all fed and watered. Thank you all very much.

Of course some attendees came from outside “our area” and we have put them in touch with other Division's in the hope they get satisfied. We did have several people say they came on our course because there was nothing running in their area.

I went to the apiary on Feb 18<sup>th</sup> and we have still only lost one colony. There is still some time to go and I am sure they will eventually emerge in the spring rather weak. I am hoping to run four colonies in the way I described at the last meeting, and these will be taken at random. The idea is to simulate what we should all have at home, and they will not be interfered with for taking nuclei for beginners' packages, but run entirely for honey production.

At long last, thanks to Fionn, the honey recipe website is up and running <http://www.honeyrecipes.org.uk/>. Development is in the early stages and we have a long way to go. Any comments or recipes will be welcome.

I have now lost 5 colonies out of 16, which is bad considering the winter. Several years ago I would not have expected to lose any. Looking at my records I can trace all back to queen problems at the back end of last year. It seems that others around the country have experienced similar losses. Today Daisy and I quickly looked at two of her colonies and all remaining 11 of mine. Both of hers were fairly strong, and about 3 of mine were as well, but all the others were weaker than they should be, although I think all but one will pull through. We did notice drone brood in worker cells in virtually every colony, which is not good news. In some colonies there were small drones that have obviously emerged from worker cells. We also noticed a large amount of crystallised honey the bees were trying to do something with. This is obviously ivy that yielded very well last autumn. When the weather is warm the bees can move

around to find liquid stores, but a cold snap could mean starvation. I suggest you look at your colonies and if there is little liquid stores then feed thin syrup, 1lb of sugar to 1 pint of water.

Brood rearing will increase from now on and March is the usual time for colonies to starve. Don't forget it takes one cell of liquid stores and one cell of pollen to produce one bee, so they will use their stores up quickly.

You can help your colony retain warmth by closing the hole in the crown board. Don't leave it too long otherwise you will have a lot of wild comb in the space between the crown board and roof.

By the time you read this I expect to be back "home", so please use the 'phone numbers above, as 700 088 will soon be disused. This has been a lot longer than expected and I would like to thank all those members who have been so kind in helping me out. I have not always been able to take advantage of some offers of help, but everything has been very much appreciated. Thank you all very much.

Roger Patterson.

## **WSBKA Chairman's Report 2007**

The saddest part of the year was the sudden death of John Hunt in May. John performed several duties for WSBKA and at the time of his death he was Secretary, Editor of County News, BBKA delegate, and Convention organiser. The Secretarial duties were performed by President Brian Tolworthy and me, and I produced the County News. John Glover of the Wisborough Green Div agreed to take on both these posts and is settling in very well. Christine Stevens of the Chichester Div has taken over as Convention Organiser, and has managed to build on what had already been done, and the 2008 Convention is looking to be a very good event.

Of course when someone is taken away from us like that many things have to be done quickly, to avoid the bereaved having to deal with the usual correspondence that someone like John has to deal with. We therefore had to inform all those who we thought might contact John, and I'm pleased to say we largely managed it.

The WSBKA Committee felt we needed to remember John in some way, and as he was keen on beekeeping education we purchased three copies of Celia Davis's new book "The Honey Bee Around and About", and gave one, suitably inscribed, to each Division for their library. We have also dedicated the 2008 Convention to John.

The Convention was a great success in the "new" venue of Lodge Hill. The format was a departure from the usual format, as we had several workshops where attendees could go to whichever one they wished. When I started beekeeping in 1963 the West Sussex Summer School was held at Lodge Hill, but due to financial cuts WSCC stopped running it, so WSBKA ran an annual Convention that has evolved, with some gaps, into what we have today, and we have returned to Lodge Hill.

The Bee Market and Auction was successful, but the number of lots were down, although the overall quality was very good. Bidding was brisk and the prices were good, reflecting the

current increase in interest in beekeeping. We are no longer allowed to use the lawn at Brinsbury, and I found it quite difficult selling things to people who were spread out, due to the narrowness of the new location.

The Littlehampton Div closed down, and most of their members have joined Worthing. I am pleased to report that all Divisions had an increased membership in 2007, and I am particularly pleased for the Chichester Division who have had a rather bad time in the last few years. I have attended several of their winter meetings, and they have been well attended with good speakers. It has been noticeable this winter that all Divisions have been able to use some of their own members to give talks for a variety of bee related subjects, and that shows a healthy situation.

There were several members from all Divisions who sat their BBKA Basic Assessment, seven of them on one hectic day at the Wisborough Green apiary. Several of those will be sitting their modules in 2008 and I wish them all well. Now there are some showing an example perhaps others will follow. We certainly have to be better beekeepers than in the past, and from what I have seen from the Basic I think all relatively new beekeepers should attempt it, even if they don't go any further. I am sure all those who studied last year will tell you how much extra they learnt, and how much they enjoyed it.

Because of the reduction of WSBKA Divisions to three, where we had five not so long ago, we have decided to increase the number of Divisional Delegates from two to three, and this has made committee meetings easier.

I thank both WSBKA and Divisional officers and committee members who have put in such a great effort this year to organise events that have benefited beekeeping, and ensured the improvements we have all seen. I hope improvements will continue, and early indications are they will.

Roger Patterson. February 2008

## **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) for details.

**March 19th** AGM followed by “How's your Honeycomb” by John Stevens.

This meeting will be at the Bader Arms in Tangmere and will commence punctually at 7.30pm. Do please stop by at the bar and buy a drink on the way in as we enjoy the private room free of rent.

**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.

**March 13<sup>th</sup>** Talk by Norman Carreck. NDB.

## Summer Beekeeping in Italy

A situation has become vacant in Trento, Italy for a temporary period from 1<sup>st</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2008. The employers have specifically requested that this vacancy be promoted within the UK. BBKA have requested that this be brought to the notice of members as widely as possible. Any member requiring further information, please contact Christine Stevens 01243 533559 or email on [ieem@compuserve.com](mailto:ieem@compuserve.com)

## AGM of WSBKA – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**NOTICE** is given to all members of West Sussex Beekeepers' Association that the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting is to be held in Pulborough Village Hall, Pulborough, on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008, commencing at 7.30pm.

It is hoped that as many Members as possible will attend to support the Association.

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM, held at Pulborough on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Chairman's Report
5. Election of Officers

### Present Holders:

#### ***President – Brian Tolworthy***

Chairman – Roger Patterson  
Treasurer – Derek Yates  
Secretary – John Glover

#### ***Representative to ADM – Roger Patterson***

Representative to NHS – David Staples  
Exam Secretary – Rosanne Blacklock  
Minutes Secretary – Geoff Keech  
Membership Secretary – Derek Yates

The Post of President falls vacant this year. All other Officers, except for the Treasurer and Membership Secretary are prepared to continue in office if elected.

6. To appoint the Accounts Scrutineer for 2008.
7. Any Other Business (to be notified to the Secretary by 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008.)