



**West Sussex Beekeepers
Association**
Wisborough Green Division



Newsletter May 2008

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Intermediate Beekeeping Lecture – May 6th

We should all look to improve our bees and Roger Patterson will be giving us some ideas on what to look for and how to do it, either on our own or in a group situation. This is not a queen rearing lecture but will concentrate on using opportunities we are regularly presented with using modifications of standard manipulation, with no requirement for extra equipment.

This is designed for beekeepers of all abilities who are members of any division of WSBKA, and will take place at Pulborough Village Hall commencing at 7.00pm.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will make a commitment to attend. This is being provided free of charge by the Association.

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.

Saturday	3rd May	Apiary Meeting Noon (Beginners) 2.00pm Advanced
Wednesday	14th May	Apiary Meeting followed by barbeque. (6.30pm)
Saturday	24th May	Noon and 2.00
Wednesday	4th June	6.30 followed by BBQ
Saturday	14th June	Noon and 2.00

To improve the focus of the meetings there will be two start times on Saturdays - 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.

To get the best out of meetings, a number of demonstrations take place at the same time in the apiary. Please be considerate to the demonstrators by not distracting them by wandering about between demonstration groups, chatting in the background, etc etc. We are very grateful for them giving up their time to demonstrate and we should be trying to make their lives easier.

Bee Auction – 10th May

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 (we'd be very grateful for plants to sell on the day so please bring along any spares that you may have and of course some money to buy the plants that you don't have but would like).

The annual Bee Market and Auction will take place at Brinsbury College, Pulborough, on 10th May. Items eligible for sale will include nuclei or stocks of bees, beekeeping equipment, gardening tools and apiary maintenance equipment.

Bees will be accepted for Sale between 8.30 – 10.30 and other items between 8.30 and Noon.

The Auction will commence at 1.00pm.

Full details including Entry Forms are available on the website www.wsbka.org.uk.

Patterson in Print – Roger Patterson

This has been my worst year ever for winter losses. I have lost 50%, and the survivors are very weak. The bees at Dounhurst are in a similar state as mine, but losses have been less. I am having them checked to see what the problems are, as it isn't obvious. I have spoken to several people and done some searching, which leads me to think it may be virus related, or perhaps *nosema ceranae*.

It seems the situation elsewhere is similar to ours. At the BBKA Convention at Stoneleigh I spoke to several people and experiences vary widely. One person has two apiaries, one with 15 colonies that have all survived and are strong, the other with 11 colonies that have all died. Derek Ready is recovering from pneumonia, and I have been helping him with his bees. He has two small apiaries with three in each, and has lost two in each apiary, yet another apiary of 14, with I believe no losses (apart from a late disappeared queen) and they are largely quite strong.

We will need to build up the colonies at Dounhurst before we are able to supply bees with the beginners packages, so can I repeat the request of last month to let us know of any swarms please. It has already been suggested that members whose bees are strong may be prepared to donate a nucleus to the cause, and already there have been offers, so if are willing to contribute then you will get frames and foundation as replacements.

I have been sent the script of an article that is on the website of the Vegan Society. Some extracts are:-

..... "Honey is nectar produced by flowers, swallowed by bees, then concentrated, partly digested and finally regurgitated. It could fairly be described as bee vomit".....

..... "At the heart of every bee colony is the queen bee - the only one capable of laying eggs. While the ordinary "worker" bees live just a few weeks during the active season, the queen can live for several years. However, in commercial beekeeping the queens are regularly killed and replaced – some experts advise as often as every six months. New queens are mass produced by specialist breeders under controlled conditions - virgin queens are artificially inseminated with sperm from crushed males".....

..... "Sometimes whole colonies are killed off to save feeding them over the winter".....

..... "Vegans use no bee products, preferring to forgo the doubtful benefits and wellknown risks [such as infant botulism] of substances stolen from bees".....

I keep telling you beekeeping is fun!

A FIRST-TIMER AT STONELEIGH - Tom Moore

Having made the trip to Stoneleigh for the BBKA Spring Convention and Exhibition on 19th April, I thought it might be of some interest to those who have never been to read the random thoughts of a first-time visitor and relative novice.

Arriving at opening time (9.00 a.m.) the first surprise was the length of the queue to get in (and how cold the wind was)! Oh, and there's that man Patterson looking very official and striding off somewhere on a mission. The man in front says to remember to buy something you don't need today.....

Once inside, what to do first? Having studied the programme we had planned what talks we wanted to go to, but time first to check out the various exhibition halls, see which suppliers we wanted to take more time over. Try to ignore the huge machines costing thousands of pounds – we're not in that league! Never realised there were so many companies in the market, clothes, hives, extractors, queen-rearing stuff, everything you could want and more.

Off to the first lecture. Can this man really tell me how I can be better at seeing eggs? Seems I am not alone, it's full, I only just get in. Varifocals are a problem – vanity he says – go for bifocals and/or a clip-on magnifier; and what's all this about red lights to check the bees at night without disturbing them? Then back to the exhibition, and a few bits from Thornes' sale of seconds, take them to the car, and the purpose of the plastic wristbands becomes obvious, they let you back in! Now quick to the next talk, it starts in 15 minutes – but no, already full, doors closed, I am turned away. Rush to the bigger hall for second choice, just get in, and hear a superb talk on CCD, or rather on the history of ups and downs of colony losses and what really lies behind them.

More (expensive) shopping, and very early to the final talk on my list, yet still have to stand. By the time that ends it's 5.15, the exhibitors are clearing their stands away, and I realise I haven't had time even for a cup of coffee since breakfast time! Off to the car and the drive home, complete with most of the things on our list.

Advice for anyone thinking of going next year. Do go, it's amazing. Good talks, a great chance to see all the equipment, and even meet a few people you know. Plan, plan, plan. Get to the talks early. Take money. Go for more than just one day if you can. And did we buy something we didn't need? Only time will tell, but nothing that wasn't on our list.

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

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

May 21st – Alan Byham talking on Disease Recognition.

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

May 4th – Visit to central Sussex Out Apiary at Horsham

May 11th – Out Apiary meeting

May 17th – The Alternative Bee Safari with David Staples

May 24th – Out Apiary meeting

South of England Show 5th – 7th June

The show organizers are anxious to encourage our membership to enter the Bees and Honey section of the show and in a varied schedule of classes, have highlighted 2 in particular. One is the “Children’s Class” which is being run for the third year, without there yet having been a single entry.

“Bounty from the Hive” requires a display of 6 different items of bee produce, attractively arranged. This class is designed to show the public the wide range of tasty and useful products that are possible from our bees.

Stewards are also required on all three days of the show and a free entrance ticket and picnic lunch is provided.

For further information, please contact Committee Chairman, David Staples by writing to him at **14 Northfield Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1QW** or if you simply require a Schedule and Prize List, contact John Glover glover.fetchingshollow@gmail.com

Sting Allergy Survey

This was first hinted at in the last BBKA News and is now ready to proceed. The survey is conducted via a specialised web site and takes very little time. Go to the BBKA website to find the direct link to the survey. Currently the link is on the 'News / Current News' pages.

You do not have to give your name and the survey is subject to all the ethical controls of any medical study. A more complete article will appear in BBKA News as soon as possible, as will the results later in the year.

Please respond if you are a beekeeper, the survey is not just about severe reactions to stings, it is trying (in part) to establish the extent of this among our community so **ALL RESULTS ARE IMPORTANT**.

If you wish to offer material for inclusion in future editions of “County News”, please contact John Glover at glover.fetchingshollow@googlemail.com