



## West Sussex Beekeepers Association Wisborough Green Division



# Newsletter October 2008

### News

From The President of the WGBKA.

Rupert Burne has decided to step down as Newsletter Editor due to his work situation changing. In recent months he has been dealing with it from abroad, and this makes it very difficult for him. He never has much idea where he will be from week to week, and any planning becomes impossible. We thank him for doing such a good job, and the newsletter is certainly in a better state than when he took over. Thank you very much Rupert, and we are pleased you intend to carry on beekeeping. Chris Peach has offered to replace Rupert, and with only a week or so's notice has managed to get this issue out before going on holiday. Thank you Chris.

### Events

## **Annual Supper: Saturday 11th October - 7.30pm - Pulborough Village Hall**

Join us to celebrate the end of the season with a delicious supper and excellent company ! All members are welcome, with 'other halves', children, friends.....and anyone else who might be interested. If you would like to come, bring £7 a head with you on the night to cover meat, bread, cheese and a drink or two, and members are asked to bring along either a salad or a pudding as you prefer. If you are able to come, please let Judy Knight know before the event to book seats (01403 752169), and say what you will be bringing. Volunteers to help with cooking the meats and to set up the hall will be warmly welcomed ! See you there !

Judy

### Dewey Caron Lecture - Feedback

"Enjoyed Saturday very much. Good to hear such an accomplished speaker and good that he knew so much about our country and the problems, as well as those in USA. The other speaker was pretty good as well."

"Hugely enjoyed yesterday and could happily have listened to Dewey Caron for a week, thank you for arranging it. I think there were a lot of club members not there and they missed out big time. Now worried about you gobbling down all that pollen."

"A brief note to thank you for a really enjoyable convention yesterday. Dewey was excellent and although covered much of what we know there were some rather interesting snippets that we did not!"

"Thoroughly enjoyed your talk yesterday and can confirm that we have seen many of the problems you were discussing, this year. Your talk made the trip worthwhile. Dewey Canon, although very professional, did not tell us much that we didn't already know but added to an enjoyable afternoon."

**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                      11<sup>th</sup> October 2008                      Apiary Meeting**

**Saturday                      1<sup>st</sup> November 2008                      Apiary Meeting**

**Saturday                      21<sup>st</sup> March 2009                      Beginners Day**

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.

**Patterson In Print**

– Roger Patterson

In the last couple of days the bees have been going like stink. They are working the ivy which you can smell without opening the hives. I have never seen ivy flow until last year when huge quantities of nectar came in, but it looks as if we are getting a repeat. It granulates quickly and some colonies last winter died of starvation because they couldn't get water to liquefy it, although other colonies did well on it. I think the best thing to do is to gently feed syrup at the same time, so they have a mixture.

As some of you know I oversee and am a Moderator on the BBKA Forum. Recently someone posted the following:-

"I built a hive last year and ordered a Queen from Thornes which I took delivery of in late May of this year. I followed their instruction on introducing the Queen except that I didn't remove the attendants. I removed the cork plug from one end of the cage and placed the cage mesh down between frames in the bottom super. I then put the Queen excluder on top and another super on top of that then the roof. Excitedly and one week later (almost to the minute) I went back to check progress. I saw a few bees coming and going around the entrance and decided not to disturb them further. A week later again I went back to see no activity, when I lifted the lid there was no sign of any bees or indeed any sign there had been bees there except for the cage and a little pile of candy on the floor. Are there any blindingly obvious reasons for this desertion? I do have a couple of theories but wondered if anyone could shed any light on it."

It turned out they had put the queen in an empty hive without any bees!!! There are benefits in joining a local BKA!!

We are now coming to the end of the active season and it gives you an opportunity to look back and note what you need to do in preparation for next season.

Continued overleaf:-

We all see things that we could have done better, or even things others have done that we could copy.

This might be the use or modification of something, or perhaps a management or handling technique. Beekeeping is getting more difficult and we need to be more astute.

I think the method of having “support” colonies has worked very well at Dounhurst. It has ensured that the four colonies in the “unit” have been totally productive. The “support” colony has worked very hard supplying brood, bees, and queens to other colonies. I hope those who were in my groups benefited from it and may do something similar on their own. If so they may come up with other ideas we can all share.

Now some of you have your first crop you may need to find something to do with it. If you have enough beeswax perhaps you may wish to make some furniture polish or cream. Honey can be used for lots of things including in recipes. For those who are new you could try [www.honeyrecipes.org.uk](http://www.honeyrecipes.org.uk)

## 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)

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

**15 October 2008**      *Photographing Bees – and other things*  
With Photography Competition  
Chichester Camera Club

**24 October 2008**      *The Chichester/Petersfield Skittles Challenge*  
Date & time to be confirmed

### Worthing

Contact Brian Tolworthy on 01903 241369

Website <http://www.worthingbeekeepers.fsnet.co.uk/>

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

## Spring Convention

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

### Annual Bee Auction 2009

For many years now, the event has been organised and run by David Staples. This

is a demanding undertaking, requiring top quality organisational skills as well as a sound knowledge of beekeeping.

Sadly, David has indicated that other commitments will mean that he is unable to continue next year, and the Association is therefore seeking a suitable replacement and it is hoped that somebody with the appropriate skills will offer their services.

For further information, please contact your Divisional President or Chairman.

The Association consider it appropriate to respond to this document, which can be viewed at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bee-health/consultation.pdf> The text of our response has been sent to DEFRA and is as follows:-

A RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT STRATEGY FOR BEE HEALTH PUBLISHED BY DEFRA

We feel that the document itself has been constructed and presented in a way that makes it difficult to read and more lengthy than necessary, and this might deter many interested parties in making a response at all.

Having spoken to our Officers, I would like to make the following observations:-

It is clear from the document that DEFRA accepts the importance of honeybees, yet at a time when there are more disease or potential disease problems than ever before, funding has been drastically cut. We feel that an explanation of this apparent anomaly is necessary.

We feel it important that vital research facilities, lost in the past, should be reinstated and funded to a sufficiently high level to make them fully effective.

The unrestricted importation of bees has resulted in the introduction of Varroa to this country with disastrous consequences that we are all aware of. There is now the similar threat of further exotic pests, such as Small Hive Beetle and Tropilaelaps, yet we still allow the importation of bees. We feel that an import ban would safeguard the health of bees in this country and would contribute to a huge financial saving in the longer term. We feel this money would be better spent on bee research, than on overcoming a problem that could be prevented.

The Strategy does not address the problem of queen performance, which has been evident for several years, supercedure and disappearing being the main factors. This was a contributory factor in some of the losses experienced by our members during the 2007/8 winter.

The Strategy appears to place responsibility for education upon beekeeping organisations, and this process is short sighted and would place an undue burden on the individuals involved. These would generally be persons who are not engaged full time in beekeeping and who probably lack the knowledge to teach to a high level. This would need to be an ongoing process to keep pace with the turnover of membership. Furthermore, the elected posts of some BKA's have a limit, and a person who is quite knowledgeable may be replaced by somebody with little or no knowledge.

Finally, we are disappointed that the use of antibiotics is still seen as a suitable part of EFB control.

John Glover

Honorary Secretary

As in previous years, Alan Byham, our RBI is requesting information on honey yields and prices in our area. The information is particularly important this year, as the cooler and wetter weather is resulting in tremendous variations in honey yields in the South East. Please help Alan by completing the attached survey and Email it to him [a.byham@csl.gov.uk](mailto:a.byham@csl.gov.uk) As always, personal information is kept secure but average yields and prices are passed to DEFRA and form part of the annual statistics for food production. Information that we can provide to DEFRA about the size and value of our honey crop and therefore, by implication, the value of honeybees to the economy, will give added credence to claims for further investment in bee health.

## **HONEY STATISTICS & AVERAGE PRICES.**

### **South Eastern Region Honey Information – England and Wales 2008**

**Beekeepers Name** .....

**Address** .....

.....

#### **AVERAGE PRICES**

#### **Price (£) lb notes**

Flower Direct Sales ..... (honey sold direct to the consumer)

Flower Wholesale ..... (honey bottled and sold at wholesale price to a retailer)

Bulk Flower Honey ..... (honey sold in bulk containers, 30lb tubs etc.)

Heather Honey Direct Sales ..... (honey sold direct to the consumer)

Heather Wholesale ..... (honey bottled and sold at wholesale price to a retailer)

Bulk Heather Honey ..... (honey sold in bulk containers, 30lb tubs etc.)

Cut Comb ..... (sold direct to the consumer)

**Total Honey crop**, in lbs ..... (total honey crop for year)

Weight of 'run honey' ..... (in bottles or bulk containers, not heather honey.)

Weight of heather honey ..... (total weight of heather crop)

Weight of Cut comb .....