



**West Sussex Beekeepers
Association**
Wisborough Green Division



Newsletter September 2008

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2.00pm Sat Sept 13th (half day convention)

Dewey Caron lecture He is a world class speaker and it is very rare that we have the opportunity to hear someone as good as this. He will be visiting us on this date and so please put in your diary. Cost is £5.00 and Judy Knight (details above) is taking the bookings

Subjects that will be covered are:-

Bee Nutrition – What we know (and don't know) about bee nutrition, and how we can supplement bees for survival, stimulus and gain.

Queens, queens, queens – All aspects from finding, replacing, mating, rearing and biology.

As a late addition to the programme, Roger will give a talk on the Queen performance problems we have all seen recently, together with suggested management techniques to overcome them.

October 11th Bee Supper – date for your diary Pulborough village hall

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	6th September	Apiary Meeting – Second application of Apiguard
Saturday	20th September	Apiary meeting – Removing Apiguard and feeding.
Saturday	11th October	Apiary Meeting

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

I have just heard of a free online beekeeping book <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/agrs93.pdf> I have only glanced at it, and although it is American there seems some sound advice, but of course some is not relevant to the U.K. It takes a little while to download.

We have had a lot of non beekeepers look at our bees lately, an open evening where we entertained 6 people, and two Saturday meetings in August where there were a total of 15. Some won't take up beekeeping, but others might.

Due to the problems we have experienced with queens we are now adding my talk on the subject to those of Dewey Caron on Sept 13th. We must all keep a watchful eye on our colonies from now on so we make sure we have fertile queens going into the winter. I am convinced some of last winter's losses were due to failed queens.

I had a look at Beebase <https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/> recently and discovered one case of EFB in "Midhurst" and two separate cases "near Horsham", with one and ten hives involved. Alan Byham is not allowed to reveal the apiary or beekeeper, but these locations are both in "our patch" and if we knew we could alert our members. If anybody is aware of them then please let someone know, so we can help members.

Wisborough Green Honey Show – Karen Clemens

A huge thank you to all those who supported the Honey Show held on Monday, either through entering, helping out or coming along to have a look!

We had a fantastic 86 entries, which took a lot of judging. Special congratulations go to Rosanne Blacklock who won the P.N. Burch Cup (awarded to the Wisborough Green member with the highest number of points in the show) closely followed by Joseph Ready and Daisy Day. Congratulations also to Judy Knight who won the George Wakeford Memorial Rose Bowl and NHS Blue Ribbon for the best exhibit in the show with her '3 jars of honey presented for sale'.

Thank you again for helping the day to be such a success. Let's try and break the 100 entries barrier next year!

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

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

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

Wednesday 17th September – Making candles and soap with beeswax and honey by Derek and Liz Ready.

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 September – Preparing for winter.

Saturday 13th September – Findon Sheep Fair

Spring Convention

I gave an incorrect date for this in the last County News as 2nd March 2009. Please note that the correct date is 7th March 2009.

Annual Bee Auction

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.

National Audit Office Examination of Honeybees

Details of this survey were circulated by Divisions earlier this month. Please note that the deadline for completion of the brief survey, should you wish to do so, has been extended to 12th September. Follow the link

If you do not have online access, paper copies are available from John Glover (01403 751899).

DEFRA Draft strategy for bee health

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

South East Honey Survey 2008

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@csf.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

Beekkeepers Name

Address

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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

Number of Colonies (total number of colonies owned on 31/08/08)