

# Wisborough Green Beekeepers Association

## Newsletter – February 2019

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Contributions for the March newsletter should be received by Friday 22 February.

### From the Editor

At last the days appear to be lengthening, and Roger has some advice in preparation for the Spring. Before the season gets going, however, there are a number of learning opportunities for members, so please take a look at the *Dates for your diary* section. In particular, note the WSBKA presentation about *Asian Hornets*, and the BIBBA *Sustainable Bees & Queens* event at which Roger will be speaking. There is also a final call for the WSBKA Annual Convention this month.

If you would like to attend the proposed Microscopy Day, please contact Roger as soon as possible. At present there is not enough confirmed interest for the event to be viable.

Finally, if anyone is looking to add or replace a colony in the Spring, Suzy has some nucs for sale.

*Tamsin*



Photo by annca via Pixabay.com

## Dates for your diary

### Winter Meetings

**Tuesday February 12<sup>th</sup> – CANCELLED.**

**Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> – Annual General Meeting**

### Honey and Wax preparation evenings

Daisy and Roger are organising two evening sessions on preparing these two major hive products. Discussion has only just started and no date has been fixed, but will probably be evenings in **early March**. Please look out for emails.

The purpose is to discuss and demonstrate the processing and presentation of both products from the hive onwards, whether for home consumption, sale or for show. We will also cover how a judge judges honey, so it will help those who wish to enter our show.

### West Sussex Beekeepers Annual Convention

**Saturday 23rd February 2019**

**Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Pulborough**

**Final Reminder for our Annual Convention!**

This is your final reminder to book a place at the West Sussex Beekeepers' Annual Convention on Saturday 23rd February.

The Convention has again attracted a renowned group of speakers to cover a wide range of topics with the main lectures being presented by Clive de Bruyn, Dr. Martin Bencsik and Adam Leitch NDB. There is something for everyone, beginner to expert.

Apart from the three main lectures, you can choose to attend two out of the six seminars and in between times it is a great opportunity to catch up with beekeeping friends throughout the County and beyond.

Remember, you can also stock up on beekeeping equipment and reading matter from Paynes Southdown Bee Farms.

Tea and coffee will be served during the breaks and also a simple lunch.

Advance booking per person for WSBKA members, £22. Members of other Associations and non-members, £27. On the day if space allows, £27. Book now to ensure you get a place and can attend your preferred seminars.

Contact: Chris O'Riordan on 01403 253020 or email [wsbkaconvention@gmail.com](mailto:wsbkaconvention@gmail.com) or see the website [www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk).

Remember the special bonus for beginner beekeepers! In conjunction with Paynes, we are pleased to offer a £10 Payne's voucher to the first 10 beekeepers from WSBKA who book a place at the Convention in 2019 and who have attended a Beginners' training course at any Division of the WSBKA in 2018.

It is a special opportunity to make a beekeeping purchase with a high discount!

## Introduction to Beekeeping

Rudgwick Village Hall, **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019**

A day for those who haven't started bees or only just have. Details are on the website.

## Asian Hornets

Leconfield Hall, Petworth, **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 7.00 pm**

Bob Hogge, a beekeeper from Jersey, will be giving a presentation about this alien pest. It is now established in Jersey and probably on the mainland too, judging by the number of confirmed nests. It is strongly advised that members attend this free event that is hosted by West Sussex BKA.

Asian Hornet Action Teams (AHATs) are being set up and we will need volunteers. Further information later.

## Sustainable Bees & Queens – BIBBA event

Rudgwick Village Hall, **Saturday 30 March 2019**

There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience about the ever-increasing importation of bees and queens. This is on several grounds, including the possibilities of introducing pests, diseases and pathogens, aggression in subsequent generations and the unsuitability to our fickle climate.

Defra has recently conducted a Queen Replacement Survey that shows the majority of beekeepers prefer home-reared queens but need help to produce them. In addition, many BKAs are unable to produce enough bees for their beginners and queens to head them.

In response to the obvious need the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) are staging a series of one day regional events during the 2018/19 winter. These are to help and encourage everyone from the small-scale beekeeper upwards and BKAs to produce bees and queens from local stock, by using simple techniques that may be little more than a variation of what many beekeepers already do and at little or no cost.

Topics include:-

- Why raise queens?
- Addressing perceived problems in producing queens in the U.K.
- Overwintering bees and queens.
- Demystifying queen rearing.
- Simple queen rearing methods.
- Simple and efficient ways to produce nuclei.
- Suggested methods for BKAs to supply bees and queens to members/beginners.
- Methods for small and larger quantities.
- Benefits of teaching apiaries.
- Queen rearing facility in teaching apiaries.
- Queen rearing as a collective exercise.
- Producing bees and queens, yet still getting a good honey crop.
- Including queen rearing and bee improvement in BKA teaching programmes.
- Reducing winter losses.
- Other events that provide relevant tuition.

It will be helpful to beekeepers of all abilities from beginners to the most experienced, as well as BKA officials, beekeeping teachers, apiary managers, and demonstrators.

The all-day event (10.00am-4.00pm) costs £11/head (around 30% of the price of one queen and 5-10% of a nuc!). Refreshments will be provided, but please provide your own lunch. Booking must be made in advance <https://beekeeping.events/event/sustainable-bees-and-queens-south-east>.

## WSBKA Auction

**27 April 2019.** We will need helpers on the day at the auction. If you can offer assistance please email Debbie Lawrence ([deellorry@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:deellorry@hotmail.co.uk)).

## Microscopy Day

**Despite several members indicating they would like to attend a microscopy day Roger has only had one response. If it isn't viable we won't run it. A venue hasn't been arranged yet and it won't be until we know how many are interested. Please indicate by February 10<sup>th</sup>, otherwise it will be abandoned. Details below.**

We are hoping to have a couple of microscopy days that are scheduled for **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April**, probably 10.00-4.00. These are themed "*The internal and external view of the honey bee*". They are intended to help beekeepers understand their bees and how they function. No previous experience is necessary.

The main tutor will be Jim Pearson who lives in Yorkshire, but we can bring in other tutors depending on the numbers who book. This will be similar to workshops run by Jim at the BIBBA Conference in Cirencester that Meriel Bottle and Richard Gibby attended. If you want to know more, I'm sure they will answer questions.

The venue and numbers we can accommodate will depend on the response, so **please reply ASAP**. There is no cost for WG members, but there will be for non-members to help pay for expenses. The number of microscopes will also limit the number we can accommodate. We will be using x10-20 magnification stereomicroscopes (also called "binocular"). We have managed to source 5 so far, but we are in need of others. Has anyone got an instrument we can borrow please?

It will help if attendees are willing to purchase their own instruments and I offer some options. The *Brunel MX2* <http://www.brunelmicroscopes.co.uk/stereomicroscope.html> is recommended as a beekeepers' microscope. If you wish to purchase your own please let me know as we may be able to negotiate a discount for several.

A cheaper alternative at less than £50 is the *Bresser Biolux ICD 20x Stereo Microscope* from <https://www.bristolcameras.co.uk/p-bresser-biolux-icd-20x-stereo-microscope.htm> at £49 <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bresser-Microscope-Biolux-ICD-Stereo/dp/B0017J7NW6> at £49.99 and [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bresser-Junior-Stereo-Microscope-20x/dp/B001UJGV4?psc=1&SubscriptionId=AKIAJJRY7MSLSE45JVFA&tag=d5t5w\\_1-21&linkCode=xm2&camp=2025&creative=165953&creativeASIN=B001UJGV4%20at%20](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bresser-Junior-Stereo-Microscope-20x/dp/B001UJGV4?psc=1&SubscriptionId=AKIAJJRY7MSLSE45JVFA&tag=d5t5w_1-21&linkCode=xm2&camp=2025&creative=165953&creativeASIN=B001UJGV4%20at%20) at £39.76! This is battery powered so it can be used in the field. The eyepiece tubes are vertical, so may be a little uncomfortable to use for long periods.

An option is a *Solomark* at £69.99, also battery operated, but this has 45° eyepiece tubes, so it is easier to operate and it has an adaptor to take a Smartphone, so you can photograph what you see.

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B06XP8D4G9/ref=sspa\\_dk\\_detail\\_2?psc=1&pd\\_rd\\_i=B06XP8D4G9&pd\\_rd\\_w=Lilml&pf\\_rd\\_p=8e5be0e3-b258-4b06-8b6e-695b24f935a4&pd\\_rd\\_wg=n45qa&pf\\_rd\\_r=7850TRSBJWW6VKHSRVZD&pd\\_rd\\_r=5a0e0f5d-09fc-11e9-b808-fdb51f2211df](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B06XP8D4G9/ref=sspa_dk_detail_2?psc=1&pd_rd_i=B06XP8D4G9&pd_rd_w=Lilml&pf_rd_p=8e5be0e3-b258-4b06-8b6e-695b24f935a4&pd_rd_wg=n45qa&pf_rd_r=7850TRSBJWW6VKHSRVZD&pd_rd_r=5a0e0f5d-09fc-11e9-b808-fdb51f2211df)

A look online will show several alternatives of the above, all at roughly the same prices. I have checked with Jim Pearson and he says the *Bresser* and *Solomark* will both be suitable, but you need to satisfy yourself before buying. They are very affordable as a starting point. Another option is to buy one for a child or grandchild, then borrow it!

I know I have asked several members at meetings, but I need a firm commitment please. Please **email me** [roger-patterson@btconnect.com](mailto:roger-patterson@btconnect.com) stating:-

Which day(s) you are available? If both, then indicate both, so I can allocate the most convenient. I need to know, so I can do some juggling.

Have you a suitable microscope you can lend us for a couple of days?

\*Would you like to order a Brunel MX2?

\*Are you willing to purchase your own microscope from the options above?

\*This will guarantee you a place, as other places will be limited to the number of microscopes we can source.

If you need any further help please email Roger.

## Patterson in Print

This month's PiP is short as I am busy writing the presentation for the "*Sustainability - Bees and Queens for Everyone using low-cost, simple methods*" that I am presenting around the country. Details are in this newsletter. The closest one to us is in Rudgwick on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March. I know it's some weeks away, but bookings are above 50% hall capacity already, so I suggest booking to avoid disappointment. I know some material may be known to those who attend apiary meetings, but there is a lot of background information and suggestions for beekeepers that we can't always give at meetings.

I have been amazed at the popularity of the topic. We have 9 venues (one was organised so late it hasn't been publicised yet). To date there are approaching 900 bookings.

One thing I often do in the winter is to remind beekeepers to **clean out bird boxes**. Tree bumblebees *Bombus hypnorum* are one of the earliest bumblebees to make a nest, which they usually do in old bird nests, often before birds start nesting. These alien species are quite aggressive and have become a nuisance to beekeepers, who are called to remove them by members of the public who don't know much about the different species of bees. Removing old nests from bird boxes will lessen the problem, so get your friends and neighbours to clean their bird boxes out too.

Towards the middle of the month I will be **closing off the feed-holes** in crown boards. The bees should be more active and can deal with ventilation on their own. There are people, especially online, who are keen



to "advise" on ventilation, some having a poke at me for leaving feed-holes open during the winter. I have done experiments several times and usually come up with the same conclusion that having a gentle flow of air is drier for bees. The photograph shows the top bars of a colony that had the feedhole closed, but was on OMF. You can see the mould caused by damp air. We need to remember that chalk brood is a fungal disease that is aggravated by damp. This photo was taken on 9<sup>th</sup> January. I have left some feed-holes closed, others open this winter. All the former were like the photo, all the latter showed much less mould. As ever, with beekeeping you learn far more by observation and common sense than reading something online.



The **lecture videos** from the National Honey Show are now coming on-stream, so please take a look. <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture-videos.php>. There are videos that go back to 2013, so a good resource.

I always look forward to the coming year and there are some exciting things on offer including the auction, summer meetings, shows and the **honey show** that will definitely take place this year on August Bank Holiday Monday. Please take advantage of them and give your support.

Roger

## Wanted and For Sale

Please note that all descriptions and representations in this section are provided by individual members and that WGBKA does not endorse or take any steps to verify the information supplied.

### For Sale

Due to a wrist injury, Suzy Lion has some nucs for sale. They are in Paynes polynucs and so far are looking strong, headed by clipped and marked 2018 Queens. She may also have some full colonies available. Please contact Suzy at [selion52@gmail.com](mailto:selion52@gmail.com) if you are interested in reserving or purchasing bees for the Spring.