

# Wisborough Green Beekeepers Association

## Newsletter – November 2019

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Website: [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk)

Facebook Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/486401598062884](https://www.facebook.com/groups/486401598062884)

### **Officers and Contact Information:**

Life President: Roger Patterson	01403 790637	<a href="mailto:roger-patterson@btconnect.com">roger-patterson@btconnect.com</a>
Chairman: Murray West	01798 867048	<a href="mailto:murray@mt-w.co.uk">murray@mt-w.co.uk</a>
Hon. Secretary: Tess Clarke	07773 413025	<a href="mailto:secretary@wgbka.org.uk">secretary@wgbka.org.uk</a>
Hon. Treasurer: Richard Gibby	01403 588092	<a href="mailto:treasurer@wgbka.org.uk">treasurer@wgbka.org.uk</a>
Membership Secretary: Richard Gibby	01403 588092	<a href="mailto:membership@wgbka.org.uk">membership@wgbka.org.uk</a>
Newsletter: Tamsin Farthing		<a href="mailto:newsletter@wgbka.org.uk">newsletter@wgbka.org.uk</a>

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**Contributions for the December newsletter  
should be received by Friday 29 November.**

### From the Editor

This week I visited my 98 year old great uncle. He has been beekeeping since 1972, making all his own hives, and still keeps one colony in the garden. Like all the beekeepers I have met since starting to learn the craft about 18 months ago, he was only too happy to talk about his experiences and was still enthusiastic about observing his bees and their behaviour. I have found that learning about bees is a cumulative process, adding a little more knowledge or a different viewpoint each time, and am looking forward to the *Improve Your Beekeeping* sessions this month. There are still spaces on these two courses, so do attend if you can. As our bees head towards winter, Roger has some advice for protecting them from damp and vermin, and there is a final reminder about *Beecraft* subscriptions.

*Tamsin*



Image by [PollyDot](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## Dates for your diary

### Winter Meetings

**26 November at 7.30pm** in the Emmanuel Fellowship Chapel, Spy Lane, Loxwood.

This will be very much a fun event and it's all about food! Looking back through the last 10 years' worth of Newsletters, it would appear that the last time we had such a meeting must have been about 15 years ago. It's a relaxed evening where you are invited to bring a dish of comestibles to share - provided of course the food includes honey. It can be a starter, main, dessert, cake, biscuits or even sweets. Hopefully, there will be enough for everyone to have a taste and there will be a short slot for you to describe how it was made, how easy it was to make and so on. If you are short of ideas, then there are loads of recipes on the Wisborough Green website and follow the related links button to the Patterson Recipes page!

*Ray Noakes*

### All Day Winter Learning – 3 and 24 November

There are still some places left for the "Improve Your Beekeeping" days; see further details below. If possible please book using the form on the website ([www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk)), but if you suddenly become available, then please just turn up.

Please note that these sessions are FREE for WGBKA members. No matter how long you have kept bees, there is always something more to learn, so everyone will benefit from attending. Not to be missed!

## Improve Your Beekeeping

Wisborough Green BKA are organising two one day courses that will cover some of the information that beekeepers need to know in order to manage their bees efficiently, with care and understanding.

Tuition in the apiary with a colony of bees in front of you is valuable for honing practical skills and putting theory and management techniques into practice. It is better if the beekeeper has a reasonable knowledge and understanding of what is being demonstrated, otherwise they are shown how to do something without knowing why, but where do they learn that essential information? These courses fill those gaps and are packed full of good sound information that is not always easy to teach at apiary demonstrations.

They will be held early in the winter, so those who feel they have gaps in their knowledge will have plenty of time for further study.

There will be two levels, "**The Early Years**" and "**Intermediate/Advanced**". This is to suit all beekeepers although it is expected that many will attend both. If you aren't sure which one is for you then ask Roger.

**The tutor:-** Roger Patterson

**Cost:-** FREE to WGBKA members inc refreshments. Bring your own lunch. There is a fee for non-members, so on the booking form state that you are from "WGBKA" and £0 fee.

**Venue:-** Rudgwick Village Hall, Guildford Road, Bucks Green, West Sussex. RH12 3JJ

**Dates:-**

**Sunday November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019. "The Early Years"**, where we explain what is happening inside a hive and how the colony functions.

**Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. "Intermediate/advanced"** discusses various management techniques based on the knowledge gained in the earlier session. This will include some tried and tested methods that are not in books.

For further information and to book, please see [www.wgbka.org.uk](http://www.wgbka.org.uk)

## Patterson in Print

The month has rushed by and I haven't had much free time, so there will be less of me this month.

**Daisy gave a nice talk** on *The Rise and Fall of the Colony Throughout the Year and our Possible Responses as Beekeepers to the Changes* at our October meeting. She covered a lot of things and made the very important point that no two seasons are the same. This is a very important point and one that isn't made often enough in my opinion. If you read a book, magazine or look on a screen you are often told what to do and when, rather than doing things that bees are telling you they need. The observation of a colony of bees in many places has been replaced by what I call "Beekeeping by Numbers", then when bees don't respond in the way they are expected to do they are accused of not reading the book!

The Autumn is a very important time in my view, as the winter survival of a colony is very dependent on carefully bedding the bees down for winter. Remember what bees want. As well as enough bees, food and a good queen, they need to be **dry and vermin proof**. I cut the vegetation away from around the hive so there is free flowing air. Apart from when it rains, this should keep the outside of the hive relatively dry. Damp inside a hive can do far more harm than cold and can be a killer of even the strongest of colonies. Many beekeepers pack up their hives with no through **ventilation**, then insulate them. No top ventilation, even with an open mesh floor (OMF), can lead to dampness. Apart from my early beekeeping years I have always left one feed hole in the crown board open and given no insulation. I know this reduces damp because several years ago at Dounhurst we did an experiment. We left 10 colonies on both solid and OMFs with the feed hole closed and 10 with them open. All survived the winter, but there were two noticeable differences in the spring. Those with the feed holes blocked off all had more chalk brood and a blue/grey bloom on the frame tops that was obviously fungal, where those with open tops had little or none. That confirmed to me that leaving feedholes open is probably better for bees. For those who have glass or polycarbonate quilts I think it essential to leave feed holes open. Interestingly I have recently seen polycarbonate quilts with no holes. My guess is there will be a lot of condensation.

I suggest fixing **mouse guards** before long, as I once imprisoned a mouse because I was too late.

I am writing this the day after getting back from the **National Honey Show**. I saw several WG members and all seemed to be satisfied with the show. Although I didn't have time to chat to her because I was busy with the lecture programme, I understand that **Meriel Bottle won a first prize for her honey**. Well done Meriel and I hope you keep going, as successes like that will encourage others.

The feedback from the lectures was good which was pleasing. I find it strange that scientists often come up with views that ordinary observant beekeepers have known a long time but have been dismissed. As soon as a scientist says the same thing they are believed!

There may be some **ad hoc meetings** coming up, so look at your emails regularly.

Roger

## Beecraft Reduced Subscription Rate And Renewals 2020

BEECRAFT is the leading monthly magazine for beekeepers and WGBKA members, through a bulk order, get a reduced subscription rate. The magazine can be received in hard copy or viewed electronically. You can see sample copies here:

<http://www.bee-craft.com/see-inside-our-magazine/>

Subscriptions run from January (magazine delivered at the end of December) but in order to receive the reduced rate, Beecraft need to be informed, and subscriptions received, by the cut off date.

The direct subscription price from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 is £35, but if you subscribe through Wisborough Green the cost will be **£29.75**, a significant discount. There is a digital version available at £19.75 including VAT (no discount). Those subscribing to the paper version may also view the digital edition **free of charge**.

**In order to qualify (and to ensure uninterrupted delivery if you are renewing your subscription), I must receive your order and payment by mid-day on November 27th at the latest.**

You can **either** send a cheque (payable to WSBKA Wisborough Green Division) to:

Gordon Allan  
Stone House  
High Street  
PETWORTH West Sussex  
GU28 0AU

**OR**

Transfer the money directly to the Division's Bank account:

Account name: WSBKA-Wisborough Green Division

Sort code: 20-42-58: Account number: 90086460

**Reference:** Your surname followed by "Beecraft"

**AND** email me on [petworthgordon@btopenworld.com](mailto:petworthgordon@btopenworld.com) with the completed form and date of transfer.

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